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Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry Cavalry

The Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry Cavalry.

Boer War
1899 · 1900 · 1901

"Each of them doing his Country's Work".

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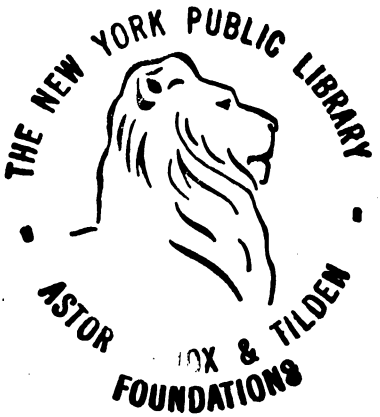

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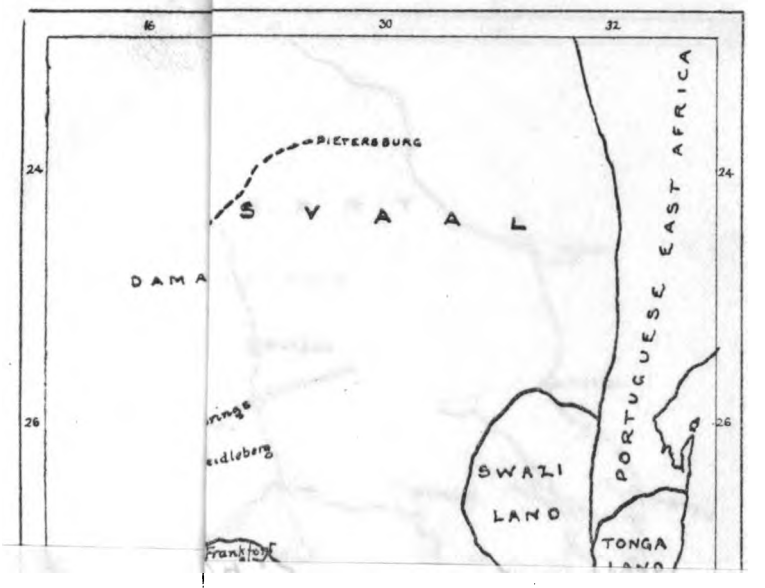
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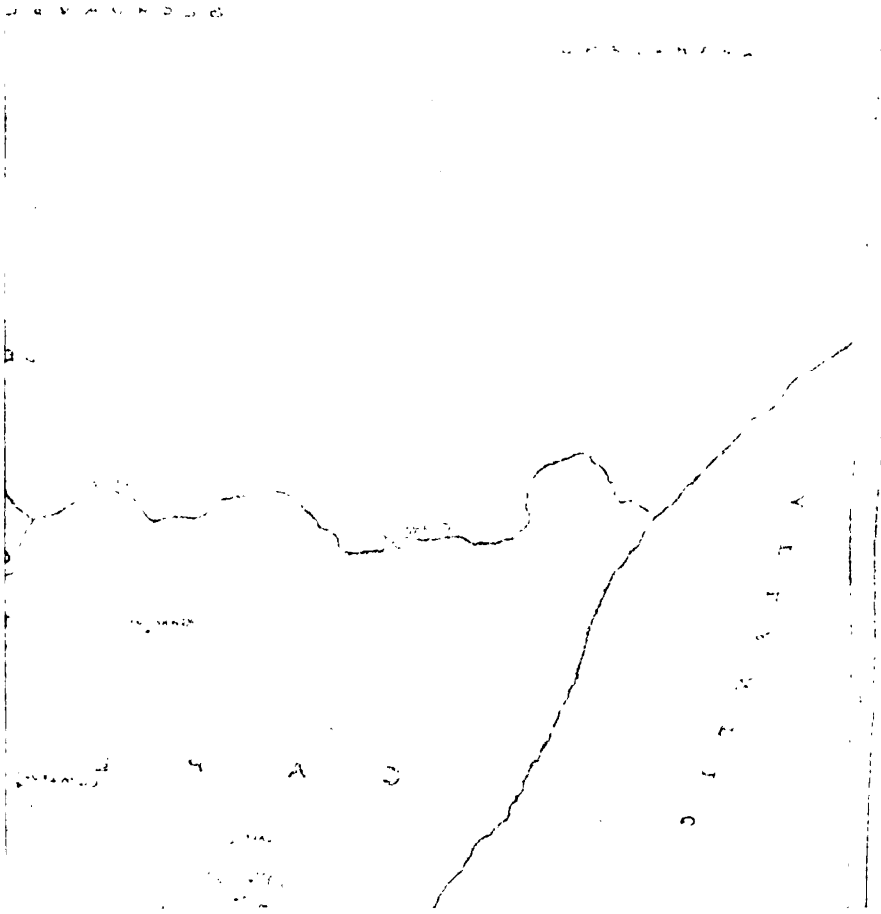

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Dedicated to Major George Kemp, M.P.

The Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry Cavalry, 23rd Co., I.Y.

A record of incidents connected with the services of the first contingent of the D.L.O.Y.C. in the South African Campaign of 1899-1900-1901-1902; of interest also to the

WESTMORLAND AND CUMBERLAND YEOMANRY, 24th Co., I.Y.,

who were our partners and comrades-in-arms.

BY

TROOPER L. H. JOHNSON, D.L.O.I.Y.

With Illustrations by the Author.

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PREFACE.

HAD it occurred to me before starting with the Yeomanry to the War that there was such a good opportunity to write a descriptive account of our proceedings, I should have made a special effort to gather all the information available on the spot to make such a description as complete as possible. As it is, I have collected together letters which I wrote from time to time to a local newspaper with which I happen to be connected, describing our movements and doings, and which I have been able to write up more fully with the assistance of letters and diaries kindly lent to me by comrades and others. The sketches are very fairly and faithfully reproduced by photo-engraving methods in colour, from small water colour drawings which I made either on the scene or soon after the event, and which gave me considerable pleasure as a pastime during short intervals in our long, tedious marches.

I have published this book more with a view to keep alive the memory of a most interesting period of events amongst my comrades than with any idea of official or pretentious reference.

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INTRODUCTION.

WE had followed the course of the war day after day since the Boers had issued their ultimatum—pinning little Union Jacks and Dutch Tricolours into maps of South Africa, indicating the position and movements of the opposing forces, and watching keenly the progress or otherwise of either side, little thinking maybe that in a very short time our small regular forces and the South African Colonial Troops would be so hard pressed owing to the immense area to be covered, and to the natural formation of the country—so much more favourable to the enemy and to defensive than offensive operations; the great distance from the Mother Country, and necessary supplies, and the large number of men required to protect the lines of communication, garrison the towns, scout the country, attend to transport, &c., and—to give the Boers their due—owing to a very great extent to the plucky, obstinate, and clever fighting qualities of our enemy—that the offers of assistance from Volunteers at home, and in our Colonies, would be gladly accepted by the War authorities Four months of anxious watching passed with almost daily reports of stiffly contested engagements with the enemy, and brave deeds done, which served to confirm the fear that we were not by any means having

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things all our own way, and convinced us that a great emergency had arisen, which demanded such attention and such special efforts to be made as are probably unprecedented in the history of our wars. From many points of view it was a most favourable opportunity, not the least of which was the test to our home Volunteers, and especially to the Yeomanry, being mounted troops, and consequently particularly suitable for the country in which the war was taking place, to show what sort of fighting material was in them, and whether the small amount of training which they had had as soldiers was really valuable and practical, and on the right lines, and there is no doubt that the results have been most satisfactory; so far so, that the Yeomanry—which as a Cavalry body was not a conspicuous success before the war, except at full dress church parades and such like, and was on the down grade—has so distinguished itself, and has proved of so great value in this war, and has increased so greatly in numbers and efficiency, that it is now undoubtedly one of the finest branches of the Service, and will be reckoned on in future to give very valuable assistance when occasion calls for mounted troops. Not only has this war shown that we have a well-trained body of Mounted Volunteers ready to defend our own shores—and even, if need be, ready to serve their country in distant lands, and help to protect their Colonial brothers—but it has proved the existence of a reserve body of young men of good physical training, both in the towns and in the country parts, who have not had the opportunity of joining any organised military corps, but who have been used to just such a life of healthy, active pastime as fits them for the severe exposure and arduous duties of a soldier.

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As soon as the offer of the services of the Yeomanry and other Volunteers was accepted, large numbers of these men presented themselves to be tested in marksmanship, riding, and general fitness: so that in a very short time the requisite number of efficient men was obtained, and many more were enrolled as willing and prepared to go to the War, in case a larger number should be needed and a second call be made, as has come about. It is especially creditable to our Volunteers, most of whom were engaged as business men, clerks, artisans, etc., that they were qualified and willing to take up a rifle, and at such short notice, and with little special training, to serve as soldiers, and acquit themselves with so much distinction. The penalty of patriotism has been very severe in some cases, and men who were formerly prospering and had good business prospects have been so seriously checked by their absence from their business, and by complete change of surroundings and habits, that they can never recover; many of these will no doubt return to the Colonies and help to build up the new possessions for which they have given up so much to win, and will make the finest kind of citizens—the soldier citizen—ready to guard and improve what has cost them so dearly to gain. Others have suffered severely from wounds, sickness and exposure, and will always feel the effects of such a severe strain, and it is sufficient testimony to the usefulness and value of the services of the Yeomanry that a larger percentage of the original number of Yeomen sent out to South Africa were either killed or placed *hors de combat* than is the case in any other branch of the Service, proving that no distinction has been made in favour of our amateur soldiers by reserving soft corners or easy positions for them, and that the Yeomanry have been needed, and made as

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good use of, and have borne the brunt and hardships of the campaign, as well as any.

There is a tendency amongst some who have stayed at home reading their newspapers in comfort, and who do not take the trouble to learn the facts, to criticise our share in the war, and to make our work appear as insignificant as possible, and to try to convince themselves and those who listen to them that we saw little or nothing of the war, and that our services were of very little value. To those who really have been interested in our movements during our absence, and know how necessary and important such movements and positions as ours have been, and realize that campaign life at its best, independent of the actual fighting, is such a test to physique and character that only the strongest and best come through it without serious ill results, such criticism is absurd, and gets the treatment it deserves from them. It may not be out of place to explain here in a condensed form the value of such work as has been allotted to us, and the necessity and responsibility of carrying out such work thoroughly. It is folly to conclude that the hardest work and most serious fighting was done in the early stages of the war, and there was never a bigger mistake made than to suppose that the war was over when our Army had occupied Pretoria ; our opponents have shown themselves to be far more clever than to oppose us when the odds were so greatly against them, and quickly changed their *modus operandi* to constant and most troublesome attacks by small bodies on our lines of communication, and garrisons, necessitating the employment of strong forces in every part of the country to be prepared to receive attack from the enemy, who came

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together, fought, and separated again in so cunning, and in many cases, so disastrous a fashion to us—in which practice they have been so far successful as to enable the small Army which they still possess to continue in the field and avoid annihilation or capture. Most of our work has been in defending the Western side of the war area, and driving the enemy from these parts towards the East, where they were engaged by other forces, and, if possible, trapped. It is sufficient to look at a map of the Western side of South Africa to see that it is by far the most barren and least settled part of the country, consisting almost entirely of what is called the "Karoo," a sandy, unfertile, almost waterless desert land, uninviting, and most tiresome and difficult for military operations, and giving a very poor idea of the qualities and possibilities of the rest of South Africa.

In conclusion, one thing is very certain, and that is that whatever duties the Duke's Own have been called upon to perform, they have done them with a thoroughness and success, and with as much skill as seasoned regular soldiers could have done, and have received the highest commendation from the Generals commanding.

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CAPTAIN G. KEMP

A Troop.

Lieutenant J. A. B. Heap

Colour-Sergeant W. N. Griffiths

Sergeant A. G. Herrington

Sergeant-Farrier R. Miller

Corporal J. Wilson

Trooper W. Ashworth	Trooper E. Jones
,, W. Brooks	,, E. W. Kay
,, G. Brooks	,, J. H. Kershaw
,, A. Brooksbank	,, F. Lewin
,, F. Brierley	,, F. A. Makin
,, E. S. Brierley	,, T. W. Ormrod
,, S. Casson	,, E. Pearson
,, J. W. Dransfield	,, W. H. Priestley
,, W. Halliwell	,, H. Rigg
,, T. Coulthard	,, G. Rodgers
,, W. W. Handley	,, M. Smith
,, J. Hargreaves	,, C. L. Travis
,, F. Hollingworth	,, J. B. Wild

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B Troop.

Lieutenant H. M. Hardcastle

Sergeant Fairclough

Corporal E. H. Ashworth

Corporal T. Scowcroft

Bugler J. H. Barlow

Trooper C. Crowther
,, W. Crowther
,, J. A. Gee
,, E. Gornall
,, G. Haslam
,, S. Howcroft
,, G. K. Hutchinson
,, W. A. Hutchinson
,, L. H. Johnson
,, S. Jones
,, C. H. Kelsall
,, F. H. Leyland
,, C. F. Longland

Trooper C. D. Mucklow
,, P. Orrell
,, R. G. Peel
,, G. H. Pickstone
,, E. Poole
,, E. Rixon
,, H. B. Seed
,, J. Sherrington
,, F. G. Torry
,, S. Wolfenden
,, H. H. Yates
,, A. Yates

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C Troop,

Lieutenant C. H. Bibby-Hesketh

Sergeant S. Sales

Corporal W. S. Earnshaw

Shoeing-Smith W. H. Niccolls

Sadler J. T. Fearns

Trooper P. R. Agnew
,, G. H. Barnes
,, R. Bradshaw
,, C. H. Brunner
,, J. Burn
,, S. P. Chambers
,, F. Clark
,, J. W. Derbyshire
,, D. Featherstone
,, W. Graham
,, J. H. Hulton
,, L. B. Haddock
,, A. Hilton

Trooper W. C. Jackson
,, T. Jackson
,, T. B. Job
,, R. E. Launn
,, A. Marsh
,, J. E. Maxwell
,, W. A. Royle
,, J. F. Scott
,, J. H. Stopford
,, J. Ward
,, S. Williams
,, A. W. Wright

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D Troop.

Lieutenant A. W. Huntington

Sergeant W. Mason

Corporal W. Coulston

Shoeing-Smith G. Gibbs

Bugler G. Bullough

Trooper G. E. Barry
,, H. A. Brown
,, R. B. Carter
,, J. Clegg
,, A. F. Mason
,, J. E. Culeen
,, A. Edmonson
,, D. Else
,, F. Fletcher
,, F. W. Hackforth
,, G. P. R. Jacques
.. W. E. Kay

Trooper W. Looker
,, J. M. Partington
,, T. Royce
,, S. Starkie
,, J. N. Thornton
,, J. Turner
,, H. Waterfield
,, C. P. Webster
,, F. Whalley
,, R. J. Whittaker
,, L. Whitehead

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Gun Section.

Lieutenant J. J. Brocklebank

Sergeant C. Storey

Corporal G. L. Reynolds

Corporal W. Lupton

Trooper F. Brownrigg
,, E. Dean
,, W. Ellis
,, M. Elphinstone
,, E. A. Heap
,, C. S. Matthews
,, H. B. Mould

Trooper W. M. M. Radford
,, G. H. Richards
,, V. H. Stott
,, F. Thompson
,, S. M. Tyson
,, J. Warren
,, C. W. Whittaker

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Battalion Staff.

——

Surgeon Captain Charnley-Smith

Veterinary Lieutenant H. G. Westgate

Trooper W. E. Cowie

,, R. B. Chadwick

,, D. Rew

,, H. Wardell

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1st Draft.

Left England 14th April, 1900.

Corporal W. H. Torkington

Trooper J. Bennett
,, H. Higginbotham
,, H. N. Hoyer
,, A. Hughes
,, J. Hunt
,, A. B. Knowles

Trooper B. Mitchell
,, H. H. Pilcher
,, F. Rowcliffe
,, F. Shorthouse
,, H. E. Whitaker

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Killed, Wounded, and Died of Sickness.

Killed at Faber's Putts.

Corporal W. Coulston

Lance-Corporal G. E. M. Barry

Trooper F. W. Derbyshire
,, F. Hackforth
Trooper P. Orrell
,, D. Rew

Wounded at Faber's Putts.

Lieutenant A. Huntington

Sergeant C. Storey

Corporal C. W. Wilson

Lance-Corporal E. Poole

Trooper P. R. Agnew
,, C. H. Brunner
,, R. P. B. Carter
,, T. Gibbs
Trooper W. Looker
,, W. Lupton
,, J. Turner
,, A. E. Wright

Wounded outside Hoopstadt.

Trooper N. Crowther
Trooper E. Jones

Wounded at Lang Kloof, Cape Colony.

Sergeant R. Fairclough

Died from Enteric Feber.

Trooper J. W. Dransfield
,, C. F. Longland
,, W. Looker (dysentery)
,, H. E. Whitaker

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SUMMARY OF THE WAR.

1899.

May—Conference between Sir. A. Milner, British High Commissioner for South Africa, and President Kruger. The Franchise for Outlanders refused by the Transvaal President.

Sept. 8—British note despatched requesting early reply to settle questions in dispute.

„ 16—Transvaal's answer a flat negative.

Oct. 7—Parliament summoned. First Army Reserves called out.

„ 9—**Transvaal Ultimatum presented to British Agent.** Received London, Oct. 10.

„ 10—Great Britain's Reply.

„ 11—Ultimatum time expires. Boers declare War. Natal invaded by Boers.

„ 12—**Hostilities commence.** Boers capture armoured train at Kraaipan, West Cape Colony.

„ 13—Mafeking invested.

„ 14—Boers occupy Newcastle. Fighting north of Mafeking. Buller left England to take command in South Africa.

„ 15—Kimberley invested ; railway and wires cut, to south. Attack on Mafeking.

„ 16—Boers approach Ladysmith : skirmishing.

„ 18—Cavalry outposts engage Free State burghers near Ladysmith. Brush with Boer patrol near Glencoe. House of Commons informed of Militia embodiment.

„ 20—**Battle of Glencoe** ; British victory. Gen. Penn-Symonds mortally wounded. **Battle of Dundee** or **Talana Hill.**

„ 21—**Battle of Elandslaagte.** Outpost affair near Tuli.

„ 22—General Yule abandons Dundee.

„ 24—**Engagement of Rietfontein,** Natal. Boers defeated near Kimberley.

„ 25—Mafeking bombarded. Squadron of 18th Hussars captured.

„ 26—Gen Yule's Column arrives at Ladysmith.

„ 30—Ladysmith invested. Two British Battalions and one Mounted Battery (1,000 men) capitulate to the Boers at **Nicholson's Nek,** near Ladysmith ; Gen. White makes unsuccessful sortie ; Naval Brigade arrives, with quick firers. Gen. Buller arrives at Cape Town.

„ 31—Ladysmith bombarded.

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Nov. 1—Free State Boers invade Cape Colony, and occupy Colesberg.

„ 2—Wires and railway cut south of **Ladysmith—siege began.** Boers capture Norval's Pont, on Orange Free State southern border.

„ 3—Colenso evacuated ; Boers occupy the town. Colesberg bridge blown up. Boers lose heavily at Grobler's Kloof. Stormberg garrison removed to Queenstown.

„ 6—Boers cross southern Free State frontier in force.

„ 7—Ladysmith bombarded. Mafeking attacked ; enemy repulsed.

„ 9—First arrival of Army Corps at Cape Town ; sent to Durban. Boers repulsed with great loss at Ladysmith.

„ 10—Engagement at Belmont.

„ 11—Mobilization of Fifth Division ; Sir Chas. Warren placed in command.

„ 15—Wreck of armoured train near Chieveley, north of Estcourt. Capture of party by Boers.

„ 19—Boers in rear of Estcourt.

„ 21—Estcourt cut off. Lord Methuen commences his advance to Kimberley.

„ 23—Boers' position at **Belmont** stormed ; Boers defeated by Lord Methuen, with loss of 298 men. Hildyard's Brigade beats the Boers at **Willow Grange,** near Estcourt. Skirmish by Gen. Gatacre at Naauwpoort. Gen. Buller leaves Cape Town for Natal.

„ 25—British victory at **Enslin.** Lord Methuen victorious at **Graspan,** with loss of 194 men.

„ 26—Boers retreating in Natal. Way clear to Frere.

„ 28—**Battle of Modder River,** 485 British casualties ; Boers dislodged.

Dec. 6—British force concentrated at Frere.

„ 8—Sortie from Ladysmith, three Boer guns captured.

„ 10—Defeat of Gatacre at **Stormberg,** loss of 722 men and two guns.

„ 11—Lord Methuen checked at Modder River ; **Magersfontein engagement.** Highlanders repulsed ; Gen. Wauchope killed ; casualties 970.

„ 15—Gen. Buller defeated at **Colenso—Tugela River.** Eleven guns lost, and casualties 1,125.

„ 16—**Lord Roberts appointed Commander-in-Chief.**

„ 17—Further Reserves called out ; also Militia, Volunteers and Yeomanry. Lord Roberts ordered to front as Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener as Chief of Staff.

„ 23—Lord Roberts leaves England. Order for Imperial Yeomanry promulgated.

1900.

Jan. 6—Determined Boer **assault upon Ladysmith** ; British victory, casualties 500.

„ 9—Buller begins his famous flanking movement.

„ 10—Arrival of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener at Cape Town. Beginning of second advance of Gen. Buller's command. Cavalry Brigade seized Potgieter's Drift on the Tugela.

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Jan. 17—Potgieter's Drift and Trichardt Drift crossed by the British in force.

„ 20—British success at Venter's Spruit.

„ 23—**Capture of Spion Kop by Sir Chas. Warren.**

„ 25—Evacuation of Spion Kop.

„ 26—British retreat across the Tugela. Loss of 1,733 men since Jan. 9. Buller instructs Sir G. White to burn his cypher, and make terms with the enemy.

Feb. 5—British re-cross the Tugela at Potgieter's Drift and Molen Drift. Buller repulsed at Vaal Krantz.

„ 9—British return to south of the Tugela. Lord Roberts arrives at Modder River, and assumes command.

„ 11—Beginning of Lord Roberts' invasion of the Orange Free State. Col. Hannay, with mounted infantry, occupies Ramdam.

„ 12—Lord Roberts dominates Riet River; Gen. French seizes Deckil's Drift. British before Colesberg outnumbered, and retire to Rensburg.

„ 13—Gen. French seizes Klip Drift, Modder River, and Infantry follow in.

„ 14—Buller commences his memorable march, fighting every inch, to Ladysmith.

„ 15—**Gen. French's Cavalry and Horse Artillery enter Kimberley.**

„ 16—Cronje in full retreat from Majersfontein.

„ 18—Boers retreating in Natal. Gen. Brabant occupies Dordrecht. **Engagement at Paardeberg.** Lord Kitchener corners Cronje. Loss of 1,543 men.

„ 20—British cross Tugela at Colenso.

„ 21-26—Hard fighting towards Ladysmith: Buller repulsed at Grobler's Kloof. Severe fighting around Cronje's laager.

„ 27—**(Majuba Day). Unconditional surrender of Gen. Cronje at Koodoosrand,** or **Paardeberg; 4,000 prisoners.** Buller crosses Tugela for the fourth time, and captures Pieters Hill.

„ 28—**Relief of Ladysmith.** Gen. Clements occupies Colesberg.

Mar. 3—Buller entered Ladysmith.

„ 5—Stormberg occupied by force under Gen. Gatacre.

„ 7—Defeat of Boers at **Poplar Grove,** or Wolve Spruit.

„ 8—Gatacre occupies Burghersdorp. Clements occupies Norval's Pont.

„ 9—Brabant occupies Jamestown.

„ 10—British victory at **Dreifontein.**

„ 13—British seize railway near Bloemfontein. Gen. Brabant occupies Aliwal North. **Capitulation of Bloemfontein.**

„ 15—Gen. Gatacre occupies Bethulie, Orange Free State, and Gen. Clements and Gen. Brabant also cross the river.

„ 16—Gen. Pole-Carew goes south from Bloemfontein to Springfontein Enemy surrendering extensively. Methuen dominates the Vaal River.

„ 27—Gen. Joubert died.

„ 28—Gen. Louis Botha appointed Commandant-General of Boer Forces.

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Mar. 29—Engagement at Karree Siding, near Brandfort.

„ 31—British reverse at Koornspruit, **Sanna's Post.** 200 prisoners, seven guns and many wagons captured by Boers, and baggage guard wiped out.

Apr. 3—Boers return to the south of Orange State. British garrison at Wepener attacked. Roberts' communications threatened.

„ 4—Capture of five companies of British (452 men) at **Reddersburg.**

„ 5—Yeomanry capture Boer force at Boshof.

„ 9—Col. Dalgety's force surrounded at Wepener.

„ 10—Gen. Gatacre ordered to England. Sir H. Chermside takes command of the 3rd Division. Attack on Gen. Buller's camp at Elandslaagte repulsed.

„ 19—Columns for the relief of Wepener on the move from south and east.

„ 20—Methuen retires to Boshof. Convoy saved by Yorkshire Hussars.

„ 25—Boers abandon siege of Wepener.

„ 27—British forces meet at Thabanchu.

„ 30—British advance north of Bloemfontein and Thabanchu.

May 1—Lord Roberts marching north in strength.

„ 3—British occupation of Brandfort.

„ 4—Mafeking relief column starts from Barkly West.

„ 6—Passage of Vet River. British at Wimburg and Smaldeer. Hunter defeats Boers at Rooidam.

„ 7—British at Fourteen Streams.

„ 9—British troops occupy Vryburg.

„ 10—Gen. Buller moving in Natal.

„ 12—Unsuccessful Boer assault on Mafeking. Lord Roberts reaches Kroonstad.

„ 15—Buller re-occupies Dundee.

„ 16—Mafeking relief column defeats the enemy.

„ 17—Lord Methuen takes Hoopstadt.

„ 18—**Relief of Mafeking** by Cols. Mahon and Plumer. Buller occupies Newcastle.

„ 19—Buller reaches Laing's Nek. Great national rejoicing in celebration of the Relief of Mafeking.

„ 22—Lord Roberts resumes advance.

„ 24—(Queen's Birthday). Roberts' advance troops cross the Vaal. **Orange Free State annexed** as the Orange River Colony.

„ 29—Elandsfontein Junction seized.

„ 30—**Johannesburg occupied.** Panic at Pretoria. Battalion of Yeomanry captured at Lindley. Engagement at Senekal.

June 2—Buller reports to Roberts Botha's overtures for peace. Roberts replies, "My terms are—Unconditional surrender."

„ 3—Hunter occupies Lichtenburg.

„ 4—Surrender of Pretoria.

„ 5—**Lord Roberts entered Pretoria.** 3,200 British prisoners at Waterval released.

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June 7—Boers capture 700 Militia at Roodeval. Hunter occupies Klerksdorp.

„ 8—Gen. Buller operates successfully to the west of Laing's Nek.

„ 11—Methuen disperses the Boers, and restores communication. Laing's Nek and Majuba evacuated by Boers. Buller at Volksrust.

„ 12—Roberts engages Botha at Diamond Hill. Hunter occupies Potchefstroom.

„ 13—British occupy Wakkerstroon.

„ 18—Hunter occupies Krugersdorp. Baden-Powell occupies Rustenburg.

„ 23—Sharp fight at Honings Spruit.

„ 24—Occupation of Heidelberg from Pretoria, and establishment of touch between Roberts and Buller.

„ 26—Telegraph opened between Johannesburg and Durban.

„ 30—Two British Columns leave the Pretoria-Natal line to reinforce the troops in the east of Orange River Colony.

July 7—Buller visits Roberts at Pretoria. Officer commanding at Ladysmith reports that 800 British prisoners have been put over the Natal border by the Orange River Boers. Bethlehem taken.

„ 11—British mishap at Nitral's Nek.

„ 19—De Wet escaping westward from Brandwater Basin, and fighting near Lindley. British pressing hard around the main body of the Orange State troops near Bethlehem.

„ 23—General advance from Pretoria eastward.

„ 25—Baden-Powell surrounded by Boers at Rustenburg.

„ 26—Hunter captures Fouriesburg.

„ 27—British occupation of Middleburg.

„ 29—**Surrender of Gen. Prinsloo,** 4,000 prisoners. First train run from Durban to Johannesburg.

„ 31—British supply train wrecked at Frederichstad.

Aug. 6—De Wet crosses the Vaal.

„ 7—Gen. Buller moves northward from the railway.

„ 9—Discovery of the Pretoria Plot to capture Lord Roberts and Staff. Arrest of instigators.

„ 14—Scouts from Middleburg meet Buller's advance troops south-west of Machadodorp.

„ 17—Gen. Ian Hamilton engages Boers at Olifant's Nek.

„ 19—De Wet passed between Rustenburg and Pretoria on his way north, eluding the British cordon.

„ 26—Combined attack of Lord Roberts' and Gen. Buller's troops on the main body of Boers at Dalmanutha. Commandant Olivier, Free State leader, captured at Winburg.

„ 27—Buller captures Boer position at Bergendal.

„ 30—1,700 British prisoners at Nooitgedacht released.

Sept. 1—**Transvaal annexed.**

„ 6—Lydenburg occupied: Boers retreat in confusion.

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Sept. 11—**Ex-President Kruger leaves Transvaal,** and arrives at Lourenco Marques. Commandant-General Botha ill.

„ 13—Lord Roberts issues proclamation. French occupies Barberton, and releases British officers.

„ 17—Nelspruit occupied by Stephenson's Brigade.

„ 22—Capture of Erasmus's camp.

„ 23—3,000 Boers cross the Portuguese frontier, and surrender after destroying guns, &c.

Oct. 13—Theunis Botha, brother to the Commandant-General, surrenders.

„ 19—Boers attack Fauresmith camp.

„ 20—Ex-President Kruger sails for Europe.

„ 24—Yeomanry relieve Philippolis. Gen. Buller leaves for home.

„ 25—27—Fight with De Wet on the Vaal.

Nov. 6—Fierce action fought with De Wet at Bothaville; six guns wrested from the enemy.

„ 9—Commandants Snyman and Vermass surprised by Lord Methuen.

„ 14—Boer laager surprised by Gen. Smith-Dorrien.

„ 22—Clements successfully engages Delarey near Reitfontein.

„ 23—British detachment (400 strong) captured at Dewetsdorp by De Wet.

„ 30—Kitchener succeeded Roberts as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa.

Dec. 10—Roberts at Cape Town on his way home.

„ 13—Gen. Clements defeated by Delarey by Nooitgedacht.

„ 16—**Boer Revival.** Hertzog, with 1,200 men, and Kritzinger, with 700 men, enter Cape Colony. This was the signal for a general invasion, and town guards and local defences were hastily raised by the Cape Colonists to resist many inroads made for some weeks from this date.

„ 29—British detachment captured at Helvetia.

1901.

Jan. 3—De Wet again invades Cape Colony; British pursuing, receive sharp check at Lindley.

„ 7—Simultaneous night attack made by Boers on Belfast, Wonderfontein, Nooitgedracht, Wildfontein, and Pan. Repulsed at all points.

„ 31—British force of 362 men overwhelmed at Modderfontein.

Feb. 6—Smith-Dorrien's camp at Bothwell attacked by Louis Botha; enemy repulsed.

„ 16—De Wet again making south, with four British generals in pursuit.

„ 19—Attempt to wreck Lord Kitchener's train.

„ 22—General French defeats Lucas Meyer, driving 5,000 Boers before him up-country.

„ 24—De Wet attempts another invasion of Cape Colony, but is driven back with considerable loss by Gen. Plumer.

„ 27—Great hauls of prisoners, guns, and transport, by Gen. French, reported.

„ 28—Kitchener and Botha meet at Middelburg to discuss peace.

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Mar. 1—De Wet hunted clear of Cape Colony and over the Orange River, rapidly making north.

„ 14—More successes by Gen. French reported, who about this time did great service in keeping the enemy moving northward, capturing prisoners and munitions of war.

„ 15—Boer laager surprised at Krugerdorp. Abel Erasmus captured.

„ 16—**Botha rejects British terms for Peace.**

„ 20—Gen. P. Botha killed at Doornberg.

„ 25—Gen. Babington defeats Delarey near Ventersdorp, 100 miles west of Johannesburg, taking many prisoners and capturing 16 guns.

Apr. 1—Boer force and laager captured between Brandford and Salt Pan. Plumer occupies Nylstroom. French making great headway in clearing the country in the vicinity of Vryheid.

„ 7—Plumer occupies Pietersburg.

„ 12—Smut's laager rushed by Col. Sir H. Rawlinson, near Klerksdorp.

„ 13—Botha reported to be suing for peace. De Wet reported insane.

May 23—Boers being captured and surrendering in great numbers.

„ 29—**Vlakfontein**: Determined attack on Gen. Dixon by the Boers. British losses 179. Two guns captured and re-taken. Wounded reported shot by the enemy as they lay after the fight.

June 2—Kritzinger overcomes the small garrison at Jamestown, replenishes his stores and evacuates.

„ 6—Gen. Elliot forces a fight with De Wet near Reitz.

„ 11—Van Rensburg and his commando surrender at Petersburg.

„ 12—British force—composed of Colonials, 250 strong—cut up at Wilmansrust; two guns captured.

„ 20—Colonials suffer reverse at Waterkloof.

July 4—Train-wrecking at Naboomspruit. Rimington's Guides capture Commandant Barkhuisen and commando.

„ 12—Boers attack post near Vereeniging.

„ 13—**Capture of** what remained of the **Orange River Government and State papers.** Narrow escape of ex-President Steyn.

„ 14—Connaught Rangers lose heavily at Zuurvakte.

„ 20 Gen C. Spruyt killed in trying to cross the British lines near Vlakfontein.

„ 21—Train captured and burnt by Boers at Beautjort West. Boer convoy captured near Reitzburg.

„ 22—Three British officers and 65 men captured near Ladybrand.

„ 24—British convoy attacked near Rooikopje.

Aug. 6—**Lord Kitchener issues proclamation,** ordering Boers to surrender by September 15, the penalty being permanent banishment.

„ 16—Kritzinger routed by Col. Gorringe, and Commandants Erasmus and Cachet captured.

„ 28—General retreat of the enemy northward.

„ 29—Garrett captures Piet Delarey.

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Sept. 4—Col. Scobell captures Commandant Lotter (a rebel) and 133 men in Cape Colony.

„ 9—Lord Methuen disperses the forces of Delarey and Kemp.

„ 17—Major Gough and force surrounded and captured by the Boers on the Natal frontier ; three guns lost Squadron of Lancers cut up by Smuts.

„ 18—Mounted Infantry and two guns captured in the Orange Colony.

„ 20—Koch's commando captured. Carolina commando captured. Kritzinger rushes the camp of Lovatt's Scouts.

„ 26—Attack on **Forts Itala** and **Prospect** (Natal Frontier) by Boers. Gallant resistance.

„ 30—Delarey inflicts heavy losses on Col. Kekewich at Moedwill.

Oct. 12 Gen. French captures Commandant Scheepers.

„ 16—Yeomanry drive the Boers out of Roodeval.

„ 22—Col. Benson surprises Boer laager at Trichardsfontein.

„ 30—**Battle of Brakenlaagte** ; Col. Benson killed

Nov. 14—De Wet's force—2,000 strong—surrounds Col. Wilson's force near Heilbron : Col. Rimington surprises and scatters the enemy.

„ 27—Commandant Joubert, two field cornets, and 26 prisoners captured by Gen. Knox.

Dec. 4—Gen. Bruce-Hamilton captures Bethel commando.

„ 13—Gen. Bruce-Hamilton suprises Piet Viljoen's laager at Witkraans, 25 miles north of Pretoria, with heavy loss to the enemy, including the capture of two field cornets, and the re-capture of Col. Benson's guns.

„ 17—Capture of Commandant Kritzinger, with two adjutants, at Hanover Road.

„ 18—Reported fighting on Portuguese territory. Gen. Dartnell defeats De Wet near Langberg, Bethlehem District.

„ 19—Boers under Muller and Trichardt repulsed in night attack of Col. Park's Column at Nylstroom.

„ 20—Defeat of Botha by Damant and Rimington, near Tafelkop. Col. Mackenzie rushes Smit's laager near Lake Banagher, East Transvaal.

„ 25—De Wet rushes Firman's Camp at **Tweefontein** on Christmas Day, inflicting heavy loss on the defenders, and suffering severely himself.

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"IN BRAVE PURSUIT OF HONOURABLE DEED."

Yeomanry accepted for Service and Enlisted.

SHORTLY before Christmas, 1899, we received the first intimation that Volunteers were to be sent to the War, and it was not long before the names of those who were willing and able to go were taken at the different headquarters. Much enthusiasm and excitement took the place of the usual somewhat uninteresting, lethargic state of things at the drill-halls, so that most of those men who had given in their names, and were firmly decided to go to the War, were quite the heroes of the hour, and spent their Christmas holiday with perhaps more than ordinary cheer and interest. A second meeting was called soon afterwards to give those who had had more time to think seriously of what they had undertaken an opportunity to withdraw their names if they found that circumstances and private affairs would not allow them to leave the country. The officer in charge, in addressing the men, emphasized the importance and seriousness of the occasion, and insisted that each man should thoroughly consider his responsibilities and take the opportunity to withdraw at once if he were not absolutely free to go.

Almost without exception the same men signed on, and some new names were added to the list. All had to visit a local doctor

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to be examined preliminary to appearing before the Army doctor for the more severe and final examination. The next thing was to get suitable horses, as very few of the men owned any which could be used for campaigning. Several generous horseowners in the district presented valuable mounts to the men, and many farmers and dealers brought horses to sell to the Government for the War, so that at times our usually quiet drill ground and hall were turned into a small horse market with most of the familiar accompaniments thereof; our officer in the centre supported by the sergeant-major, veterinary surgeons, and interested authorities on horses, keenly criticizing and judging each horse as it was ridden or walked around to show it to the best advantage. Every day new orders arrived, and it was not long before we were on our way to the Town Hall, Manchester, to be formally enlisted as Tommys, though we did not, as a matter of fact, receive the customary shilling to bind the act. After being sworn in, measured for boots, and passing the final physical tests, on January 4th and 5th, 1901, we returned to our homes to make ready for the three or four weeks' training at Blackpool which intervened before we left for South Africa.

In Training at Blackpool.

Volunteer training camps are very good sport in fine summer weather, and even then some find fault, but January in this country is hardly the month one would choose for such a purpose in the ordinary course of events. However, unfortunately for us the Boers would not postpone their fighting until a more convenient season, so we had to do our training in snow and rain and fog and darkness, an experience which was quite

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sufficient to test any constitution and decide whether a man was fit to stand the exposure and hardships which go hand in hand with war. Every morning we turned out at 5-30 a.m , and—hungry and cold—slithered around in the slush and cold rain to our respective stables, which had been allotted to us, to groom the horses. An officer would visit the stables at 7 a.m. to inspect horses and men, and we would get back to our billets for breakfast at 8 a.m. We had none too much time for this meal and to clean up preparatory to mounted parade or to shoot at the range at Fleetwood at 9 a.m. The mounted parade consisted of drill and getting used to carrying our Lee-Enfield rifles, which were new weapons to us, we having until this time carried cavalry carbines, which seem like toy guns compared with the long infantry rifle, especially as at that time we were not supplied with buckets or slings in which to rest the rifle, as we were later on, and it is no easy matter to ride, and manage a horse and hold a rifle in one hand at the same time.

For the first few days our wrists felt the strain pretty badly, and the fellows did not seem to be at all happy, and I think it must have been at about this time that a new language seemed to grow up amongst us, a language rich in strange but appropriate adjectives and epithets, which flourished and increased as new difficulties arose, so that at the end of our training we felt qualified to ride side by side with veterans of the service and converse in their tongue. Even the horses seemed to understand so much better when addressed in this new speech—there was something so expressive and uncontrollable about it. Each troop was now sub-divided into sections of four men, one of the men in each subsection acting as a leader, and being responsible for the

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smartness, etc., of the others. By this plan small sections can act more easily and independently, No. 3 holding the horses while the other three men dismount and advance to the firing line in case of attack. As a rule, four chums form a subsection, and assist each other in making the duties and hardships of campaigning as tolerable as possible. On the march this co operation was invaluable, as, between four fellows it was pretty certain that one or another would generally be able to secure some extra supplies which he would carry to the next halting place and share with his subsection.

Before we left England two fine rapid-firing Colt guns were added to the equipment of the Duke's Own, and Mr. J. J. Brocklebank was appointed officer in charge of them. A gun section was specially raised to go with them, and formed a valuable addition to the original company.

At this time Blackpool, which in my experience of a former winter spent there had impressed me as being about the most cheerless and unattractive place I had visited in the winter, seemed to put on a new appearance, and was comparatively cheerful, especially at night time, when we were more or less free, and could amuse ourselves as we wished. Whether it was the enterprising progress of the town, or the fact of the Duke's Own being in training there for the War, which made it appear so much more festive than usual, it is difficult to say ; it was sufficient for us to know that after the fatigues of a hard day's soldiering in bad weather, we had the choice of spending the evening either at a first rate music hall performance at the Alhambra, a pantomime and other attractions at the Winter Gardens or Opera House, and numerous smaller attractions at the Tower, &c.

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The bracing air of Blackpool soon began to show its beneficial effect on the ordinarily sallow complexions of the men, so that in spite of bad weather and hard work we were all getting as much benefit physically as we would have done had we been having a summer holiday instead of getting in good form for fighting.

We frequently varied the day's duties by going in troops to shoot at the rifle range at Fleetwood, about five miles from Blackpool, going the greater part of the way in the electric cars, and then marching. The range is very much exposed, being close to the sea coast, and in winter time is very bleak and uninteresting; more often than not a hurricane was blowing from the sea, accompanied with blustering rain and snow which completely chilled and soaked us, so that good shooting was impossible, and the scores were scarcely record breakers; however, it was all in the day's work, and perhaps was good training—certain it is that anyone who can stand such conditions of climate is fit for service anywhere, and one who could make a fairly good score at shooting under the circumstances, was the man most needed in South Africa at this time.

During the month's training we were most kindly and hospitably entertained by the town authorities and leading trades' people, who, not satisfied with providing board and lodging at their best hotels and making us thoroughly comfortable, invited us to visit all the places of amusement free of charge, and entertained us at a very fine farewell dinner and ball—truly this was generous and hospitable.

As the time drew near when we were to leave England, we were served out with all the necessary equipment and clothing; tailors and saddlers were kept busy making any alterations

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required in the fit of their goods, which were, in the first instance, supplied by private means from local firms independently of the Government stores. We had a special muster for the officers to inspect all that we should take with us, and although the list was cut down to barest necessities, which were packed away into the smallest compass possible, the boots and socks, razors and soap, etc., made a big display when spread out for inspection purposes, and made one wonder how it was possible to stow them away into the available space. The new khaki uniform and slouch hat were undoubtedly serviceable and fairly comfortable, but when one has been accustomed to see the regulation smart-fitting uniform familiar to us for home service, khaki does not seem quite soldierly in comparison.

One part of the uniform, the puttees, which took the place of leggings or top boots, were distinctly useful, and played many parts before their services were dispensed with. I have no doubt that more puttees have been used as bandages for wounds, &c., both for horses and men, than the regulation hospital article, which they closely resemble; they made excellent girths for saddles in case of emergency, and as halters or clothes lines, traces for Cape carts, cleaning rags for our rifles, or wraps for sore throats, they were indispensable; but as leggings they are hardly a success either for use or ornament, compared with leather leggings, in which most of the men arrived home, and it was some little time before we settled down and felt at home in our new rig out.

Good-bye to Home and Friends.

We had been training for a month before we heard that orders had been received for us to sail on Sunday, February 11th,

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which left us very few days in which to attend to anything we had left undone, and to say good-bye to friends and relations at home : consequently during the week previous to sailing we were allowed leave of absence from Blackpool for 36 hours to visit our homes, having to return to our billets before midnight on the following day, which was none too much time in which to square up our affairs and take a last farewell in case any of us should not return, of which there was surely only too great possibility. The last few hours spent at home under such circumstances was a time long to be remembered, as was the final send-off at the railway station, and in the streets approaching the station, by the townspeople and friends of the men who took the opportunity to show their interest and admiration for their Volunteer representatives by making it as difficult as possible for them to get to the train, and almost tearing them to pieces in the crush and excitement of embracing and hand-shaking.

The appointed time when we should sail from Liverpool was very close at hand now, the final touches had been put to all equipment, and each man had been provided with a new khaki overcoat at the last minute, which completed the list of necessaries of kit. Saturday night arrived, and our final orders were for each man to be at Blackpool station with his horse at 4-0 a.m. the next morning ready to box the horses and travel with them to Liverpool. This being the last night we should spend in England for many months, and there being many friends of the men spending the last few hours with them before we sailed, there was not much rest for most of us, and the time soon came round when we must turn out to fetch our horses. What a transformation scene was ready for

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us as we left our comfortable quarters in the hotels ; during the few hours of the night a snow storm had been raging, covering everything with a foot or more of snow, very beautiful to look at from within, but not so attractive when one has to turn out in the very early, dark hours, and tramp around with horses and baggage. Try it for a change, some of you sleepy stay-a-beds, when it is snowing and blowing, as it was on this particular morning. If anything could have dampened the ardour of our fellows it was the state of the weather on the morning of our departure. It was a severe test, but all came up smiling and laden with a heavy kit bag over the shoulder, and leading their sturdy chargers, which, at the best of times, are as much of a handful as most men can manage, and doubly so on a cold, slippery morning, in the dark, such as this was. The excitement of getting the horses to board the train and box them, soon woke up any who were inclined to droop, and after each man had been "told off" to the small cabin attached to each horse box, in charge of three horses, we were soon starting on our three hours' journey from Blackpool to Liverpool, the band and the crowd which had assembled, even at that early hour, giving us a fine send off. Well, the less said about that journey the better, it was not cheerful, and we were all much relieved when we steamed into Liverpool docks station, and were able to stretch our limbs and get warm. The train ran alongside our fine transport, the White Star Liner "Afric," which was almost a new boat and proved herself to be a fine specimen of comfort and sea-worthiness, if not extra speedy at travelling.

We soon had our horses transhipped to the vessel, and made as snug as possible in their stalls, which is none too snug

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considering the poor beasts have only just room enough to stand upright through the three weeks' voyage, and it is no wonder that many of them die before they reach their destination. The stalls are arranged in a continuous row round the bulwarks of the ship, both on deck and between decks, each stall being fitted with a metal detachable trough, which hooks on to a beam under the horse's nose, from which to eat and drink. A large crowd of the friends of the troopers and other well-wishers had gathered on the ship and in the sheds on the quay adjoining, making an interesting gathering, consisting as it did of all sorts and conditions, from my lord and lady to the humble ship's boy. Fortunately the weather had much improved, and the sun shone out and helped considerably to brighten and liven up the proceedings. Amongst others who came to see us off Lord Lonsdall was a conspicuous figure, directing and helping men and horses. It was understood at first that he was coming out with us, but at the time of leaving he told us that he was sorry he was not able to come with us, but he intended to follow us out in a short time.

The Sea Voyage.

Towards the end of the afternoon all visitors were requested to leave the ship, as she would soon be steaming down the river, and when the last farewells were over and the band on the dock had played "Auld Lang Syne," we assembled in the big mess saloon for tea. At 9-30 p.m. we cast off from the quay and glided slowly down the river and over the bar, and early next morning were steaming well on our way out to sea. We were very fortunate in having so fine a ship to sail in, and to

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be so well cared for on board; contrary to the usual unwholesome, crowded hammock accommodation for troops, we were berthed as second class passengers, and although four in a berth 7-ft. square is none too roomy, especially in the tropics, we made ourselves snug, and enjoyed this part of the expedition fairly well.

As usual the old Bay of Biscay was a teaser to most of the fellows. The mess tables were conspicuously blank for the first few days, but that soon passed, and with plenty of duties we sailed gaily along under the scorching tropical sun with just enough breeze from the motion of the ship to make life bearable. What a contrast to the wintry blizzard we had left behind. The mess saloon soon rang with healthy, hungry hilarity at meal times, and those who attended to the supplies had their hands full for the time being. The grub was plain but wholesome and plentiful and clean, and far better than that provided for most troops, as we found out on the journey home. For breakfast we started with a dish of porridge, followed by a herring or chop, or liver and bacon, plenty of bread and butter, tea, coffee and marmalade; for dinner, soup, beef, mutton, pork or hash, two vegetables and some light pudding, and last but most acceptable at this time, buckets of lime juice water; for tea, cold meat or hash and potatoes, bread and butter, marmalade and tea. In addition to this, should a man wish for little delicacies between meals there was generally a cook or galley boy to be found, who for a trifling *pour-boire* would supply fruit and cakes. Then there was the indispensable canteen, and what a trade they did in these tropical times! Soldiers are a thirsty crowd, and we managed to lighten the ship considerably, and completely cleared out the supply

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of liquid refreshment before the end of the voyage. Just occasionally, when two or three of the fellows felt extra festive, or wanted to celebrate a birthday or such like, the extravagance of a bottle of champagne was indulged in, but it was difficult to get it cold, so it generally seemed a bit flat. We mustered approximately 300 men and 300 horses ; our Company, the 23rd, consisted of men of the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry Cavalry, divided into four troops of about 40 men each. Our partners, the 24th Company, consisted of men of the Westmoreland and Cumberland Yeomanry, and were a few short of the full complement ; we were attached to the Eighth Division South African Field Force.

Each day the orders were very similar, and bugle calls rang out from one end of the ship to the other all day long without much intermission, so we had very little idle time. Reveille sounded at 5-45 a.m , and the roll call at stables was at 6. Nearly two hours was spent at stables, watering and feeding the horses, and cleaning out the stalls (a very dangerous and troublesome business on a ship). Several of the men had nasty accidents and got badly kicked by vicious horses, most of the horses getting bad tempered and obstinate before the end of the voyage, and landing out with their heels at the men or at each other ; they need very careful handling, and are soon dead if they once get sick and give way to it ; some of the men have sat up at night and tried to doctor their own horses, and it has been very hard for some to lose a favourite horse which he had hoped to use through the campaign. At 8 a.m. the bugle sounded for breakfast, and you may be sure we were quite ready to feed ourselves by this time, and made a hearty meal. After breakfast we would

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clean our rifles and any other metal things, which soon get rusty in the sea air if not greased and cleaned, and at 9-45 the bugle sounded parade for physical drill and any military movements which could be practised in the space available. It was warm work most of the time, but kept us from getting lazy and fat, and passed the time which otherwise might have seemed tedious and long. We soon passed Teneriffe, looking very pretty in the bright moonlight with the glimmering lights of the town in the distance, but we did not stop anywhere during the voyage, and did not see any other land, and very few ships, which surprised us, as we expected to pass other transports and ships which would be carrying war material, etc., at this time, but there is oceans of room about these parts and a little thing like a ship is not of much account, and is easily lost to view out here. The horses had their midday meal at 12, and at 1 p.m. our own dinner was ready. Dinner finished and cleared up, we either attended a lecture on scouting by one of the officers, or would shoot at a mark towed behind the ship. At 4-30 the horses were again fed, and we had our tea at 5-30. If we were not on the night guard list, our duties for the day were finished, and we amused ourselves as we pleased in the mess saloon or smoking room. There was a very good little case of well selected books for a library, which was to go to the camp hospitals in South Africa after we landed, also a piano, which did much to liven things up in the evenings, especially as we had several fairly good pianists ; there were, as usual in a big crowd, numerous would-be-musicians who persisted in trying to find their way amongst the notes with one finger, to bang out the "Soldiers of the Queen," or some such ghastly melody, but they were soon known

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and marked men, and had a poor time if they ever managed to get as far as the piano. There were strict guards by day and night, and each man was "told off" in his turn either for stable guard, or in some part of the ship which needed watching in case of fire, and to keep order generally. A guard was on duty for eight hours, being two hours on guard and four hours off, and at night time it is not the easiest thing to keep awake, especially in the very early hours of the morning. Even when a guard was not actually on sentry duty he had to be in the guard room, or close at hand, where he could be easily found in case the officer should come round and require the whole guard to turn out.

We sailed about 300 miles a day, and crossed the equator on the 23rd inst., when the ship's boys were treated to the usual performance, and were evidently glad when it was all over. It is a dirty business, but these old traditional ceremonies seem to die hard. During the voyage one of the seamen fell as he was coming down from his watch in the crow's nest, and injured himself so badly that he died in a short time. We all paraded at sundown, and it was a very impressive sight as the burial service was read, and he was launched into his watery grave.

Fortunately we were allowed to wear as little clothing as we pleased during the very hottest weather, and our dress was very scanty compared with what we were wearing when we left England. The berths were unbearably hot in the tropics, and many of us would take our bedding on to the deck or under the hatchways where there might be a draught and we could sleep fresher. We were advised by our Company Doctor to be inoculated as a preventative against enteric fever, and I suppose

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about 50 per cent. were operated upon, but I did not indulge ; it evidently made the fellows very weak for some time after the operation, and from the reports of such large numbers of deaths from the disease, even after inoculation, I concluded to take my chance and reserve all my strength, which would be needed before we were finished with our campaigning.

Most of us had our hair cut *à la* prison crop, and were very much more comfortable so, though some did look more than ever like convicts in their khaki uniform and close cut hair. We had a capital smoking concert ; all the officers joined us and evidently enjoyed it thoroughly. There was some good talent amongst the fellows, so a good programme was arranged. Comic songs, of course, were in most demand, but we had good selections on the piano, violin and cornet, not to mention a phonograph—which one of the fellows very thoughtfully brought with him to vary the programme of entertainment—and some good recitations. We were now on the last lap of our voyage, and although a sea voyage is very fascinating, and the ship and water have many good points, most of us were quite ready to go ashore again to give our horses a good rest and stretch our own cramped limbs. Two day out from the Cape we passed close enough to a homeward bound ship to learn from their signal that Ladysmith had been relieved, which news we celebrated with great rejoicing; otherwise we had heard no news for three weeks, and under the circumstances we were very anxious to know what had taken place during this time. Sunday passed with Divine Service (which was very restful), but otherwise the duties were as usual; there was an atmosphere of relief at the prospect of going ashore very soon, and of getting a view of the new country, of which we should see so

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much in so short a time, and in which we were destined to play so hazardous a part.

We arrive at Sunny South Africa.

It is a glorious scene as the ship approaches Table Bay, and the great flat Table Mountain which rises boldly almost from the water's edge ; the little town and the streets and quays in the distance seem so very insignificant in the picture, in which the details and colours stand out so brightly in the clear, dry, sunny atmosphere.

At this time the harbour was full of ships of all sorts and sizes—warships, transports, and merchantmen ; of course, nothing like it had ever been seen before in these waters, and the scene will not easily be forgotten.

We anchored outside the Bay on Sunday night, and early on Monday morning, March 4th, entered the Docks, and soon had our horses and baggage once more on *terra firma*. We had been fortunate in losing only ten horses out of three hundred, with which we started ; sometimes as many as 40 and 50 have been lost out of the same number in other regiments. It is no joke handling horses on a long voyage, and the poor beasts looked very dejected and weak in the knees as we led them away from the ship ; however, they soon recovered and seemed quite happy when they got into the drill line and felt the bit in their mouths. Our voyage to the Cape had been a very comfortable and agreeable one, and the fellows looked very fit, and were eager to start away up country to the scene of action as soon as possible, but unfortunately the authorities had other plans for us. While we waited on the quay and got all our baggage and equipment

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collected, we had a good opportunity to see hundreds of Boer prisoners who were being continually brought down to Cape Town from up country, previous to being shipped away to St. Helena or Ceylon—this was just after Cronje surrendered at Paardeberg—and they looked as though they had been having a hot time of it. They were a murderous, unkempt, surly looking crowd, each with his dirty handkerchief holding all his worldly possessions, or a bundle slung over his shoulder, more like so many miserable Italian organ-grinders than fighting men, and one could easily believe what has been said about their treachery and brutality. There were five ships in the harbour full of such specimens, ready to be shipped away and kept from doing more harm for some time to come.

In Camp at Maitland.

The morning was well advanced before we were ready to leave the quay ; each man, with kit bag and rifle, led his horse, which was too weak after the voyage to carry him, in double file through the streets of Cape Town, little dreaming of the distance we had to march before we should reach our camp at Maitland. It was a terribly hot day in late summer, and the hottest part of the day as we tramped on through the dusty streets ; after four or five miles of this sort of thing, it was very evident that many of the fellows were nearly done up, and were feeling the result of their late inoculation and confinement on the boat. At last, after marching 6 or 7 miles, a glimpse of the white tents of Maitland Camp appeared between the trees and houses about a mile and a half away, and we were told that that was our destination. This information cheered us up somewhat, and we

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dragged ourselves along the remaining distance until we arrived at a large open tract of undulating sandy land shut in by the Devil's Peak and distant hills, and dotted over as far as the eye could see with the tents of an enormous camp ; but these tents were not for us, and dead beat as we were, we were soon hard at work rigging up our own lines of tents and getting our horses arranged in their places, watered and fed. The camp was situated in a beautiful spot, and in the glorious sunny weather by day and

VIEW OF MAITLAND.

moonlight nights of that time, camp life was tolerable ; there was only one drawback to it, and that was unfortunately a bad one—the dust and sand storms blew across this open country almost interminably, making an otherwise delightful spot most unpleasant and uncomfortable to live in, especially at meal times and when riding ; everything we ate was gritty, and we looked like a lot of coal heavers sometimes when we returned from hard

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work, and the perspiration smudged the coating of dust which covered us from head to foot. The whole camp of perhaps 1,000 tents was pitched on sand dotted over with cactus and small trees and bushes. There was very little grass, it being late summer-time, and everything was dry and burnt up, but the surrounding country is very picturesque, and reminded me of old times spent in Colorado, U.S.A. Later on, when I returned to Maitland on the way home, I visited the same spot, but found it very much changed from a military point of view; however, I got an opportunity to make some sketches of this charming landscape and interesting first camp from Cape Town. There were thousands of troops waiting here impatiently for orders to go up to the front, and on the other hand we frequently had convalescent and invalided soldiers from the front to visit us, who yarned to us of the actions in which they had been, and the exciting times they had had hundreds of miles up the country. At that time we were quite anxious lest the War should be over before we could get up to the scene of fighting; as a matter of fact, there was really no hurry.

We drilled regularly every day both mounted and on foot, turning out at 6 a.m. for outpost duty, skirmishing, etc., and returned with a healthy appetite for breakfast. Then stables, rifle inspection or saddle inspection, cleaning the horse-lines, and watering and feeding the horses. There were plenty of fatigues or outside duties, such as hauling forage and boxes of biscuits and baggage, digging big holes in which to bury the rubbish which quickly accummulates in such places, hauling water for the cooks, and such like; in fact the greater part of a soldier's time is spent in doing fatigues and cleaning up his tackle and surroundings, which get in a bad mess in the prevailing

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chronic dust storms. We were now living on the regulation Army rations, consisting of dog biscuits and tinned beef, very watery tea or coffee, plenty of sand, and some cigarettes. Fortunately there was a good canteen close at hand, where we could get almost anything we wanted in the canned goods line, jam and above all, plenty of fairly good grapes, which were much appreciated in this hot weather, otherwise there was not a great variety of fruit, and the jams made of native fruits, such as green figs, guava, pomegranates, and grapes, were not a success. There was also a wet canteen where at certain hours anything liquid from "tickie beer" (a washy home-made article) to Bass, lemonade or "pop," could be had. Beside the canteens, there were all sorts of cheap-jack Jews, niggers and Hindoos hanging about the outskirts of the camp, some of them doing a good business with Tommy in ostrich feathers, bachelors' buttons, pocket mirrors, bootlaces, grapes, and what not. Far away at one extremity of the camp was a picturesque old Dutch farmhouse, approached by a long avenue of fine elm trees, known as Mackenzie's Farm, and used at this time as the offices and headquarters of the Staff controlling Maitland Camp, and from which were issued all orders for the movements of the different regiments. Things were very busy at Mackenzie's Farm when we were there, and one of the duties most keenly sought after by our fellows was as mounted orderly at the farm, to carry the orders as they were issued, which sometimes meant a ride into Cape Town, to the Fort, or the Post Office, and a little diversion. Close at hand was one of the little corrugated iron buildings, erected by pious and considerate philanthropists of the country, called "Soldiers' Homes," where Tommy could sit and read or write, in any leisure time he might have (which was not

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much at this time), and get a little relief from his monotonous duties, which were almost unending by day and night. A short religious service was held here during the evening, and the men seemed to enjoy to come and shout familiar hymns to the tune of a little harmonium.

It was very difficult to get leave to visit Cape Town, or to leave the camp at all, as we expected to get marching orders at any moment, and it was only a little more than a week after we arrived at Maitland, that orders came for us to clear our camp, pack up and get back to the railway, nobody apparently having any idea where we were bound for. All were astir in the early morning before it was light, and we were soon shaking the dust of Maitland Camp from our feet and trekking back to Cape Town, where we found a train ready to take us on our first move towards the scene of the War. As usual the "Reception Committee" did their utmost to make our journey as comfortable as possible by providing literature and light refreshments on the train, and they deserve the best thanks of all concerned, for their most successful efforts to make Tommy's surroundings as cheerful and tolerable as possible under the circumstances.

Our first move up country to Picquetberg Road.

There were all sorts of speculations about our destination, but they were vague, and after travelling for about five hours, we arrived at a small uninteresting station, where we were turned out, and after securing our horses and leaving them in charge of a stable guard, we arranged our baggage in as orderly formation as possible, and prepared to bivouac for the night in the main

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road of the cluster of small buildings known as Picquetberg Road. We were the first troops to detrain at this place, which has since become an important depôt and base store for the operations in Cape Colony, and we shall probably never thoroughly appreciate or understand how important a part we acted at that time as a *force majeure*, to convince the Boer sympathizers and rebel spirits of the district that we were there purposely to suppress and prevent any attempt at open violation of the law. During the six or seven weeks in which we were encamped there, we did not actually have any encounter with the anti-British element, though there was an undoubted antagonistic smouldering furnace in the neighbourhood, which might have burst out at any time, and probably would have done so, had they been better armed and provided with ammunition; and bad as this War has been, it would have been far more difficult for us to tackle, if the Boers had managed to come down more South in the first instance, where they would have been supported and joined by thousands of Dutch sympathizers in these districts, who have, even at this late stage of the War, done an immense amount of damage, and prolonged the War by rebellion. Our first night, which was our first experience of bivouacing, proved to be a continuation of our previous unpleasant experience with sand storms, and as the spot chosen was much exposed and quite unsheltered, we spent a very miserable night, being choked and blinded with clouds of dust and sand; however, as soon as day broke we left the railway and found a suitable camping ground about a mile away, under the shelter of some ridges of hills, and not far from a very fine stream, which proved to be so useful to us for drinking water and bathing during our stay here.

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In leaving Maitland we took nothing with us except what we had on our backs, and the few absolute necessities that we could cram into our saddle wallets. Our kit bags, with change of clothing, and numerous odds and ends which we had brought out with us, were stored at Mackenzie's Farm, where they were well taken care of until we came down from the front fifteen months later. Many a time during our hard marches, and in wet and cold weather, when our clothes, ragged and thin, and shared with other occupants, were little protection or comfort to us, we would dream of our old kit bags and their contents left so far behind.

The Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry, who had left Maitland on the same day as we had, marched by road and joined us again at Picquetberg a few days later, we having prepared a space for them alongside our camp.

Picquetberg Camp.

We soon had the ground cleared of the dense short scrub, which covered these parts, by burning a large space and clearing it up. The swarms of insects which infested the place, and which had probably never been disturbed before, wriggled away before the destruction of their homes, and snakes and scorpions twisted and raced in the thick undergrowth to escape from the intruder. We did not remain long undisturbed, and during the week a strong detachment of the 4th Middlesex Regiment arrived and pitched their tents adjoining us, bringing with them a most acceptable band, which frequently played in the afternoon and brightened up our otherwise tiresome and uninteresting camp. Later on, a battery of six guns of the Honourable Artillery Company attached to the C.I.Vs. joined us, and also the Leicester

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Yeomanry and Compton's Horse, most valuable additions, and making a total force which was sufficient to keep any opposition and troublesome spirits from breaking loose and disturbing the country.

While the Middlesex Infantry guarded the railway line and surrounding hills with pickets by day and night, we patrolled the country, and visited the farms of prominent men in the district, watching their movements, ascertaining to what extent they were armed, etc. Almost every night fires would be lighted in the distant hills, looking suspiciously like signal beacons, but they were too far away for us to be able to learn what they really were. On one side of us the hills sloped steeply for five or six hundred feet, and occasionally a stray baboon would be seen taking in the situation, grinning and grunting and chattering, but always well out of our reach; beyond the hills was the pretty valley and river in which we frequently bathed, sometimes riding our horses bareback through the river and giving them a bath. On our other side was a long flat stretch of dry and apparently useless scrub land—no grass worth mentioning, but thick weed and short bush, and red sandy soil, without a single tree as far as the eye could see.

Our camp was situated sufficiently high on the slope of the hills to overlook a wide expanse of this flat country, which served us well as a training ground for mounted movements, which we practised regularly every day during the six weeks we remained there, unless away on patrol. In the middle distance, about two miles from our camp, was a small cluster of corrugated-iron buildings standing out conspicuously on the open veldt, and glittering in the hot sunshine; in the centre of this was the

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railway station and a small block of buildings consisting of a general store, a so-called hotel, some cattle sheds and pig-styes, all run by the same proprietor—Plumbly by name. He was originally an Englishman, and owned a matronly English wife and some offsprings, who, being of the female persuasion, were perhaps a source of more or less interest to our decidedly masculine camp ; but we did not get much opportunity to visit this part, as everything in the hotel was out of bounds to us, and if we happened in that direction it was always in care of an officer.

We had not been long in camp there before a substantial canteen was erected by the enterprising neighbouring hotel keeper, who was soon doing a lively business in all sorts of general stores, not to mention draught beer, which he was allowed to supply to Tommy at certain defined hours in the evening. This was one of the few occasions during the fifteen months of our campaigning when we were able and allowed to indulge in intoxicants. After we left these parts and went to the front, everything in this line was out of bounds for Tommy, who had to be satisfied with the regulation microscopic rations of tea and coffee ; and when we happened to be in a town, would pass by on the other side if a tempting hostelry was to be seen, knowing only too well that the penalty paid for, and the risk of supplying any such refreshment to us, was greater than mine host cared to run. Our hotel friend was so successful in his trade that it was not surprising that before long numerous camp followers and competitors, principally of the Hebrew persuasion, arrived on the scene, and produced the inevitable result of reduced prices for Tommy, and an occasional difference of opinion between them-

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selves which led to amusing little performances, and helped to pass the hour, which was otherwise monotonous and dull.

One of the most interesting events of these times was a three-days' march, which our Company made as a demonstration to a neighbouring most picturesque and attractive little town called Ceres. It was an undertaking which will long be remembered by all who participated therein, for several reasons. The road lay through fine mountainous country, and nearly half the distance of thirty-five miles was up a steep rocky pass in the mountains, which eventually brought us to our destination. It was a terrible climb in the hottest weather we had experienced, and for some unaccountable reason we had left camp at 5 a.m. without having any breakfast, and marched the whole day on empty stomachs, simply depending on an odd biscuit or so which we might have in our pocket, and being weighed down with a hundred rounds of ammunition and a rifle. We relieved the horses by walking ten miles, but were nearly dead ourselves as a consequence.

During this little expedition we got into serious trouble for helping ourselves to some tempting pears, which happened to grow too dangerously close to the wayside by which we marched to be neglected, and the scorching sun making them especially tempting. Unfortunately, Meinheer, the proprietor, had been on the alert and seen the act, and seized the opportunity to make a complaint to the officer in charge against poor Tommy, whose pockets were more than sufficient evidence of depredations on Dutch property. The idea of British soldiers, marching and sweltering amongst a lot of rebels, helping themselves to fruit by the wayside! Shocking indeed! So to appease the wrath of Mr. Dutchman, Tommy is ordered to humbly apologise, regardless of the fact that Meinheer

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could not understand a word of English, and seemed to be horribly scared, and finally he is handsomely paid in British gold for the loss of his fruit. Though most of the inhabitants of the place were either Dutch or black, and regarded us with anything but friendly expressions, the few English residents who lived there turned out and gave us a fine reception, supplying a most acceptable spread of tea and eatables.

Ceres is an ideal little mountain health resort, with clean and comfortable bungalows and cottages, giving it an air of respectability and tone much above the average South African towns. There is a splendid supply of fine clear water which runs down the sides of all the streets, and keeps the vegetation fresh and green, and helps much to make the place so picturesque and healthy. We returned to Picquetberg the next day, and were much relieved when the journey was ended. No doubt our demonstration had been a success, but it seemed to us to have been made at the cost of a deal of unnecessary strain and discomfort, of which we got our share later on, when such things were unavoidable and we were content to endure them.

Easter Sunday was one of the wettest days we had at this time, and gave us an idea of what is possible in the rain line in South Africa; floods came down from the hills at the back of us, and almost washed us out, making everything very dirty and miserable, but, after all, it was decidedly preferable to the dust and sand storms which generally prevailed. Many of the horses were sick at this time, and got into a very poor state; even the Vet. seemed puzzled to know the origin of this sickness, which we heard later on is caused by a fine cobweb in the dew at night time, which the horses eat, and

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which does not agree with them, consequently, after they had had their evening meal we left their nose-bags on, and prevented further sickness. My own good sturdy steed had to lay off duty for more than a week with this sickness, and got into a very miserable condition, but with care, and prevention of further harm, we managed to pull her round again, and she eventually proved to be one of the strongest and best workers in the lines. Even we ourselves were attacked by a somewhat similar complaint, and kept the doctor busy every morning prescribing No. 9 pills, that infallible remedy for all soldiers' complaints, and quite possibly for horses also.

Four, and five weeks passed, and still we got no orders to move, and officers and men were getting desperate, and hopeless of ever going up the country. Occasionally some duty would take us to the railway station, and we would be glad of the opportunity to leave camp for a little change of company and surroundings. Maybe a train would come in from the north, bringing wounded soldiers from the front on their way to the base hospitals at Cape Town, and we would get a chance to speak to some of them, and to the nurses, and would hear thrilling tales of great fights and experiences on the battle-fields and in the camp hospitals. Then there were trains full of prisoners, murderous-looking specimens of humanity, who stared with a blank open-mouthed expression, and seemed as if they had not a pleasant thought or a smile amongst the crowd. As a contrast to these, perhaps a train would come from the other direction full of high-spirited, laughing, intelligent-looking Tommies on their way to the front, who gave one the impression that they were out for a big spree, like a lot of schoolboys going

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home for a holiday. No matter how uncomfortable the accommodation, as often as not treading on each other in cattle trucks, or packed into hard old-fashioned compartments like sardines, some of them would certainly be singing—all looked happy, and it was difficult to conceive of these same light-hearted fellows possibly in a few hours exposed to most deadly shooting, and good comrades left on some battlefield.

Between these passenger trains there were frequent goods trains, straining and puffing under their heavy load of war goods, ammunition, or horses and forage, and all the necessary equipment of a great moving army spread over such an immense country. A thing that surprised us much was the scarcity of eggs, butter, and dairy produce in this great and apparently suitable grazing country ; but we learnt afterwards that there was a great demand for these things in the hospitals and towns, where fabulous prices were paid for them.

We Move to Worcester.

Apparently to pass the time, we shifted camp and moved to a spot about half a mile nearer the river, and this new move seemed to break the spell, as in a few days we got orders to pack up and march to Worcester, the most important town in the district, and famous as a hot-bed of rebellion and Boer sympathisers. Our road lay through Tulbach, a pretty little way-side village on the railway, where we had been once or twice, during our stay at Picquetberg, to play football matches against the little garrison of Cape Highlanders and others.

The first night's bivouac was at Ceres Road, a pretty spot on the railway, near which the road commences to wind up through

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the mountain pass, so well impressed on our memory by the stiff march we had made a short time since to Ceres.

During a short leave of absence from camp, some of us happened on a supply of fairly good native-made sherry wine, a luxury which could not be overlooked, and which was responsible to a great extent to our return to camp much cheered in spirits, and singing praises to the enterprising local vine growers who provided such acceptable refreshment.

Next day, we moved on to Godini Road and Worcester, where we arrived to find a camp all ready prepared for us on the far side of the town, in an open space shadowed by a fine mountain range which loomed up majestically in the bright moonlight nights at that time.

Off to the Front at Last.

There seemed to be a feeling now that we should not remain here long, and that some plan was on foot in which we should take part in some important operations far away up the country, and in this we were not mistaken, as, after three days in camp at Worcester, orders arrived for us to entrain at once, which orders were received by all with much satisfaction. So far, our interest in the war, though doubtless valuable in its place, had been too far away from the centre of action to please us, and we felt that at last we should really see some fighting, and not have to return home without glory or distinction. We left Worcester on May 15, smuggling in a good supply of any eatables we could lay hands on and a bottle or two of "Pontac"—a fairly tasty red wine made in South Africa, where grapes are so plentiful,—to take with us on the train, as there was no doubt this time that we were in for

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a long trip, and tinned beef and hard biscuits, with all their commendable points, were not the sort of goods we cared about.

For two dreary days and nights we travelled in this train, jammed and cramped together with little chance of sleeping, only stopping for a short time twice a day to feed and water the horses, which were on trucks at the rear of the train. Even at this time there was considerable danger in travelling on the railways, as, although there were guards and small garrisons posted along the line, there were any number of rebels and traitors all over the country looking for an opportunity to do some devilment and hinder us in the War. In leaving Worcester we saw the last of such camp comforts as tents, canteens, and such like, and for the next three months bivouacked on the veldt, trekking from place to place through Griqualand West, with little besides a horse and a blanket to care for, and exposed by day and night to the rain and cold of the African winter.

At Belmont.

ON HISTORICAL BATTLE-FIELDS.

Passing through De Aar, which had been, and was still such an important junction and base, being the point where the railway from Kimberley meets the line from Pretoria, we arrived at last at Belmont, were turned out, and formed our camp on the veldt, not far from the railway.

This was indeed an interesting spot, being the identical famous battle-field where the Guards Brigade, Northamptons, Naval Brigade, &c., drove the Boers from their strong position, and had such stiff fights at the end of November previously, and we felt that we were now in touch with scenes of perhaps the

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greatest importance in the War ; scenes of great engagements, on the success of which possibly depended the supremacy of Britain or Boer in South Africa.

As it happened, our troops under Lord Methuen drove the Boers from Belmont to Graspan, from Graspan to Modder River, and so on, meeting with most determined opposition, and some memorable disasters, but ultimately driving the Boers back, and recovering ground, the occupation of which meant so much to either side.

Belmont itself is quite uninteresting outside the associations of the War incidents, consisting merely of a railway station, and miserable little apology for a hotel. Where the Bel-mont comes in is one of those mysteries left to the imagination. The surrounding country too, is very bare and flat, only broken here and there by a low ridge of kopjes or small hills, which formed fine positions and natural forts for the Boers, who seldom left such positions to attack in the open, and were so well sheltered by the big loose rocks of which these hills consist. Brother Boer knew what he was about when he manœuvred about amongst these kopjes ; the difficulty and danger which our troops had to contend with were enormous, and the fearful loss of life in attacking such positions from the open veldt unavoidable. Before we left Belmont we had an opportunity to leave our lines and visit some of the neighbouring hills, where there were still many signs of the fearful destruction and results of those memorable actions. Even dead bodies of men, half covered with stones and sand, were still left exposed to view, rotting almost as they had fallen, gruesome reminders of terrible scenes of war.

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On the flat veldt were memorial stones over the graves of many of our fellows who had fallen there, and the railway station and hotel still bore unmistakable signs of the awful results of modern weapons. The railway station had been used as a hospital, &c., by our forces, and was well entrenched, but this had not saved it from being a mark for the Boers, who paid little regard to such distinctions as Red Cross and ambulance signs.

Ostriches.

At this time, fine big ostriches stalked majestically about, picking up old boots and anything that looked strange to them and possibly eatable. We found that they had originally belonged to a well-to-do farmer who had lived in the neighbourhood, and had joined the Boer forces and was still fighting against us with some commando ; so his birds had to take care of themselves, and seemed to be quite satisfied with the freedom and society which they now enjoyed. Some of the fellows who had not had any experience with ostriches, and did not take into account the size and strength of their toe-nails, made rash attempts to get their feathers ; but the ostrich is rather attached to his plumes himself, and for a bit of fun would take Tommy a canter across the country, and as his stride is about in the proportion of one to six of Tommy's, the handicap is a bit onesided.

A strong contingent of Paget's Horse arrived on the following day, and it was reported that we were to join Sir Chas. Warren, who was in the neighbourhood with other troops, to suppress the rebels who occupied the towns in the district of Griqualand West, and who had already been dispersed by Lord Kitchener, and at another time by Colonel Pilcher.

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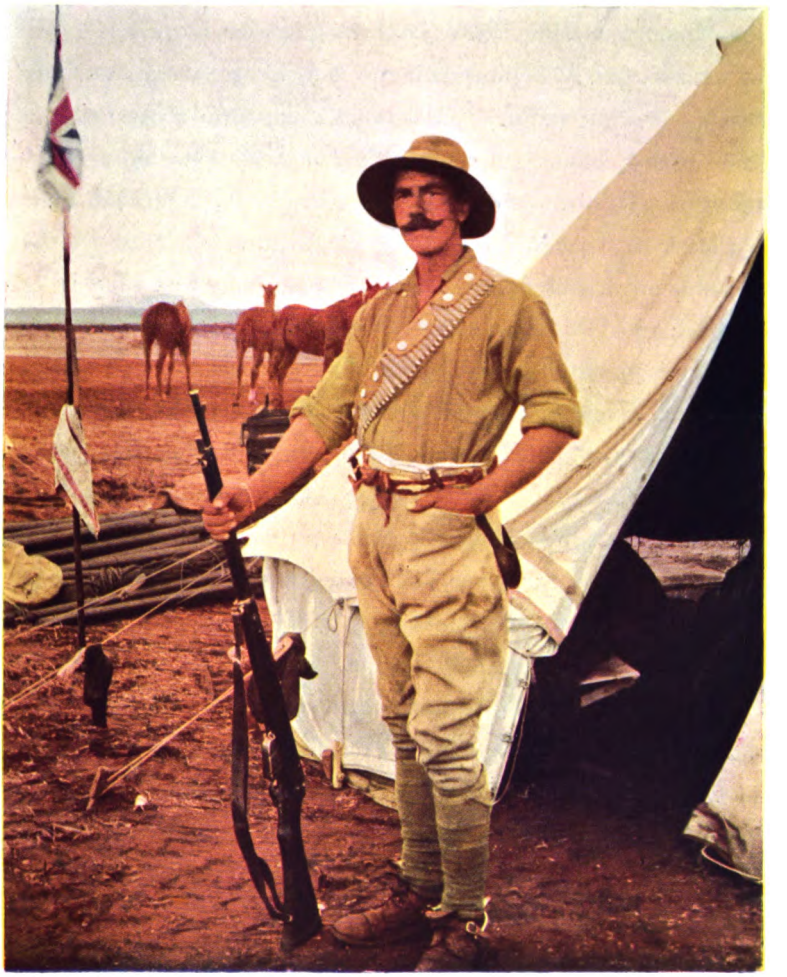

AN IMPERIAL YEOMAN IN FULL WAR-PAINT.

Chasing the Boers through Griqualand under Gen. Sir Charles Warren.

Under the circumstances it looked as if we were in for some serious work, and everything pointed to approaching action. We

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left Belmont on May 20, the second night after our arrival there, at nine o'clock at night, making a long forced march, and only halting for a short time at Richmond, a fine farm about fourteen miles from Belmont, where we arrived at midnight. After a few hours' rest we were off again, and halted in the afternoon on a big bleak farm called Rooipan, one of the numerous farms of the same name in this part of the world, meaning Red Hollow or Pan, where water is sometimes to be found. On the whole the country is monotonously barren around here, and except for an occasional green spot where some easily-pleased Dutchman has irrigated a small patch of land and produced oats and some fruit, the country consists, as far as the eye can see, of dry sandy soil dotted over with "Mimosa" bushes, that apparently useless vegetation which thrives without water, and produces a healthy thorn from four to six inches long, with a strong, sharp point which tears anything that comes in contact with it, and frequently made our horses and ourselves bleed when marching amongst it in the dark. It has a peculiar sweet-scented blossom in the form of a ball of fluff, sometimes yellow and sometimes white, which scents the air very agreeably at a certain season of the year. Otherwise, unless the land is cultivated and irrigated artificially, it is very uninteresting and uninviting.

As we approached Douglas there was no doubt that the enemy was in the neighbourhood, but they cleared out as we arrived, and we were too late to prevent them looting and ransacking everything of any value. In a doctor's house, which had evidently been well furnished, and where the owner had been in comfortable circumstances, there was little left but some books and heavy pieces of furniture, and amongst them a piano, a rare

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instrument in this country, Meinheer being better satisfied with the more piously associated harmonium or melodeon, on which to play hymns; but there was nothing in the way of eatables so we were badly disappointed, Tommy's one great aim in life in these times being to supplement his small regulation rations by anything eatable he could lay his hands on.

Douglas is quite an important little town in this district, about 80 miles south-west of Kimberley, and consists of a wide, unpaved main street, comfortable wooden bungalows and residences, and a most imposing-looking ornamental bungalow wherein the chief magistrate of the district resides, besides a fine gaol, a hotel, and some churches.

The Modder River joins the Orange River at this point, and runs close to the town; it is well wooded in places along its banks, making a welcome change in scenery to the surrounding flat, uninteresting country. Although it was now late summer time there was a good stream of water in the river, which is about 100 feet wide here, but quite shallow, so that we could easily walk across. We managed to get away from duties for a short time and caught some fairly large fish in the river, which made a very agreeable change of diet for a few of us.

May 24th was of course a great occasion for a military display and trooping of the colours in honour of the Queen's birthday. In the early part of the day we made a reconnaissance in the surrounding country, as the scouts had seen some of the enemy close by, and they had been sniping at our fellows. Later on all the troops assembled to do honour to our Sovereign Lady's birthday, and Sir Charles Warren in an address to the townspeople warned them against assisting the enemy, and made a few

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appropriate remarks on the anniversary which we had assembled to honour, concluding by all of us singing lustily the National Anthem. It was an impressive demonstration, though the natives of the place did not seem to be over loyally enthusiastic.

For the next two or three days we made several sorties in different directions. The 24th Company, under Captain Parkin, were attacked by a party of the enemy, Captain Parkin being shot in the leg and having to bring his men back to camp, the enemy far outnumbering our small party, and the opportunity not being favourable for fighting them. This was sufficient to show the spirit and disposition of our opponents, who had now been reinforced by others from Griquatown, Campbell, and the neighbouring districts, and evidently intended to dispute our progress through these parts.

We left Douglas on the 27th May, accompanied by four guns of the Canadian Artillery and three Companies of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles—a hardy, scratch lot of fellows, who had been raised in Cape Colony, and consisted chiefly of seamen, ships' stokers, &c., who had left their ships to come up country to fight, and were indeed good material for the purpose.

Marching past a fine farm owned by a genuine Dutch loyalist named Steyn, who on several occasions, both at this time and in aftertimes, proved himself to be a true supporter of British interests and a good friend to Tommy, even at great risk of his own life, his neighbours being almost without exception of the rebel breed, we arrived a few miles further on at another farm, but this time there was quite a different odour about the place. It was not difficult to see that the owner here was a rebel,

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and a prominent one, and that the place had been used as headquarters of a large body of the enemy. We even had the good fortune to catch Meinheer, the proprietor of the farm, fully armed with bandolier and rifle, and ready to go and join his confrères in the neighbourhood; he was immediately made a prisoner, and will probably spend a considerable portion of his remaining lifetime in the care of His Majesty's gaol at Douglas, instead of in the bosom of his family at his farm. There was great sorrow and weeping at the farm over the capture of Meinheer, who had every appearance of being a dangerous and desperate rebel, and so a good catch for us.

Desperate Attack on our Camp at Faber's Putts.

On the evening of the 29th May, a patrol of twelve men of Paget's Horse arrived in camp with despatches, and having off-saddled, formed a little circle with their saddles, to bivouac for the night at one end of our lines, in a spot which unfortunately turned out to be the very worst and hottest point in the fight which was in store for us later on.

The nights were now getting quite cold, and some of the fellows from each troop had scoured around to get what wood was available to make small fires, around which those men who were not booked for picket or guard sat, and sang or yarned to pass the time. We were particularly cheerful on the evening of the 29th, sitting together and singing some old familiar songs with good choruses, absolutely heedless of the fact that a strong body of the enemy was close at hand, and little dreaming that in a very short time we would be awakened from our slumbers with such an alarm *as few wish ever to hear repeated.*

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Our camp was formed on a large flat space of bare ground, about a quarter of a mile square, between the farmhouse and a large garden of fruit trees, which was surrounded by big prickly pears, standing ten and twelve feet high. On this ground there were two large square kraals, or enclosures with low stone walls, in one of which we put our horses; between the kraals we had arranged our saddles in rings, each troop having its own position, and each man his place for himself and saddle in the ring. Close to the end of this arrangement was a small brick stable, standing by itself about midway between the troops and the garden, and about the same distance from one of the kraals. The Canadian guns and the infantry were separated from us some little distance on one side, and General Warren occupied a small house beyond them. The name Faber's Pütts is so called from some old pits in the gravel on the farm where diamonds have been found.

Our small camp fires had burnt quite low, only a few smouldering ashes remaining to show where the fires had been; reveillé had sounded round the camp, but it was still quite dark, and all was quiet and undisturbed, when suddenly shots were fired from points close around the camp, followed immediately by a terrific fusilade from all sides. It did not take long to realize that our camp was surrounded by the enemy, and each man, as soon as he could get free of his blanket, made a dash for his bandolier and rifle, and then threw himself flat on the ground until he could take in the situation sufficiently to join others in advancing gradually to meet the enemy, or get to some cover and wait his opportunity. Naturally, in the darkness it was some time before

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any sort of organisation could be formed, although the officers did all that was possible to direct the men. The air was fairly alive with whistling bullets, and the ground all around us was hit with angry thuds of Martini and Mauser bullets, which sent up a shower of broken ground, or buried themselves deep in the sand. On all sides the fellows were being hit, and many pitiful scenes occurred, as there was little opportunity to render assistance to wounded and dying.

ATTACK ON OUR CAMP AT FABER'S PÜTTS.

The enemy were shooting from every side, and even occupied the small hut or stable, which was within twenty-five or thirty yards of the position which had been taken up by the few men of Paget's Horse who joined us the night before. These poor fellows had been so placed as to receive the hottest fire of any in the camp, and out of twelve of them, six were killed, and two died of wounds soon after the event. The windows of the little hut had been almost completely blocked up, leaving just sufficient room to see to fire a rifle through a small space, which was still further evidence that the attack on our camp had been premeditated and arranged.

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The garden was full of the enemy, who were well sheltered compared with our position on the bare ground, and it was impossible for us to see them in the thick growth of trees and bushes. Our gun section, who were in a good position, one gun being at each corner of the kraal nearest the garden, soon had their rapid firing guns trained on the garden, and the effect was very soon shown in that quarter, the fire from the garden now slackening considerably. Unfortunately, a bullet struck the muzzle of one of the Colt guns and temporarily disabled it, and another bullet smashed the shield attached to the other gun, but under a hot fire the gun section and their gallant officer soon repaired the damage, so that in a short time both guns were pumping lead into the thick of the enemy again.

Being by this time fairly light, we were able to make good use of our rifles and helped to drive the enemy from their cover in the garden. An incident occurred at this time which will always remain doubtful in the minds of those who took part. Someone amongst our troops, apparently in authority, but whose identity was never clearly revealed to us, called to warn us to stop shooting, as we were shooting our own fellows. Whether this warning was given sincerely, or to prevent us shooting the enemy, who were now beaten, will never be known, but it looked at the time very much like treachery, and many of the enemy were thus able to escape who would have been shot. This was the beginning of the end, in a short time we were following the retreating enemy, and driving them back, until they mounted their horses and rode away, being assisted in their departure by the booming of the big guns of the Canadian Artillery, which dropped shells amongst them as they fled.

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With their usual cunning they had commenced the attack by firing amongst our horses in the kraal, and causing them to break down the walls and stampede over the country, so that when we needed them to follow after the enemy they were nowhere to be seen, and we were compelled to give up the chase and allow the enemy to get away.

It had been an awful fight, and the sight of the dead and wounded was most distressing. In the garden and neighbourhood there were many dead and wounded Boers, who were attended to by our doctors and taken to the farmhouse for shelter. One of our fellows had been shot dead in his blanket before he could rise ; another, whilst serving the Colt gun. Several were shot on their way to assist the pickets, which were isolated outside the camp and exposed to the first fierce fusilade, and it is a marvellous thing that many more were not killed ; as it was, there were 18 killed and 30 wounded on the British side, including Lieut. Lethbridge, who had come in with Paget's Horse the night before, and Col. Spence, commanding the Duke of Edinburgh's Infantry, a very popular man, who was shot as he raised himself to give an order to his men. Otherwise, the infantry had not suffered much loss, they having been well arranged in extended order, and remaining so. Amongst the Staff who were with Sir Charles Warren, and had occasion to pass backwards and forwards on horseback with orders, a hot fire was continually directed, wounding Major Kelly, A.D.C., and Lieut. Paton, and killing Major Heath's horse.

Amongst the enemy were some of the most noted and best shots in Griqualand, who had boasted before their attack on us that they would bring our guns away with them, and drive us

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out of the land. As it happened, they got a much warmer reception than they had bargained for, and were completely demoralised by their repulse. As usual, there were men of all ages and classes amongst them—old grey-haired farmers and boys of 16 years; and we found afterwards that the attack on us had been well planned beforehand, the enemy being organized and well screened and entrenched in the old diamond pits around. There had been about seven hundred men in this commando under Commandant De Villiers, who was wounded himself, but got away.

We found in the trenches hundreds of rounds of ammunition, including dum-dum and explosive bullets, and all sorts and conditions of rifles, from ancient-looking blunderbusses to the most up-to-date and deadly Mauser.

For the next two days we were busy with the most mournful and sad necessity of burying the dead with military honours, and sending the wounded to the hospital at Kimberley, or Smidt's Dritt on the River Vaal, which is not far from the scene of the fight. We arranged a pretty little cemetery in the garden which had been the scene of the worst fighting, placing memorial tablets with the names of the men at the head of each grave. Since we left that district a good substantial wall has been built round the cemetery to protect the graves, in place of the prickly pears which originally grew there.

Requiem:

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

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The early morning fight at Faber's Pütts may well be called the *grande pièce de resistance*, the chief event, in our part of the campaign. Though we had many little engagements with the enemy at different times later on as we scoured the Western Transvaal and Orange Free State, we were never again under such a fierce fire as on this morning at Faber's Pütts. Coming as it did so early in our experiences it was a bad

OUR CEMETERY AT FABER'S PÜTTS.

shock to us, not only from the risk of losing one's own life in such an engagement, but from the many sad and deplorable consequences which result, and which act as a nightmare of the worst kind long after the event, and leave an impression which is acutely felt. Such an incident will mark that day as the red letter day in the lives of most of those who took part in the fight.

It is sufficient to repeat Gen. Warren's remark in complimenting the men on the gallant and successful stand which

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they had made, that the action, while it lasted, was as hot as any in which he had ever been engaged, and was as bad as the fight at Spion Kop, from which he had so recently come, to show that this attack at Faber's Pütts was a most severe and determined fight, and had it not been for the splendid resistance and cool behaviour of our troops—and without selfishness, this applies almost exclusively to our own Yeomanry, who were in such a position as to make them the chief mark and object of attack—who, although paralysed for a time by the suddenness and unexpectedness of the attack, made such a gallant resistance as soon as they realized the situation, that they eventually succeeded in driving the enemy from their strong position, and followed them on foot until they had made sure their retreat was certain defeat.

The consequences of a reverse to us at this time would have been most serious, and would undoubtedly have made our work in this part of the country far more difficult, and a much longer business than it actually was. As it happened, the enemy were completely demoralised, and fled before our advance, when we had sufficiently recovered from the effects of their attack to follow them from place to place, until they were at last completely exhausted and cornered and surrendered to us at Blikfontein. Most of them at that time seemed to have had all the fighting they wanted, when they filed into Donovan's Farm at Blikfontein to deliver up their arms; but they are a foxy race, and there is no doubt that, although they were given passes to go to their homes and remain there and were treated with the utmost leniency and generosity on this as on so many occasions, many of them took up arms

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again in other parts of the country as soon as they had had a short rest, and have continued to fight ; and there can be no doubt that these acts of leniency, intended as they were in the most merciful spirit, have been so greatly abused by the treacherous enemy, that they have been the main cause of prolonging the War to such an extent.

We Advance to Campbell.

We remained at Faber's Pütts for two days after the early morning attack on our camp, resting and making preparations to continue our advance. Some of the horses returned to camp, and others were found in the neighbourhood and brought back, and, with some new ones which were commandeered from the district, we managed to replace those which were shot and lost.

During our two days' rest you may depend upon it we were profiting by the lesson we had had in surprises, and were strictly on the alert ; guards and pickets were posted in every convenient place, and everyone was strung up to the highest tension, not knowing where our late opponents might be, or what new move they might be planning. The lesson we had had was a good one, and warned us against over confidence, and had convinced us of the daring and cunning ways of the enemy, which were not to be despised. It was a great strain, and everyone was much relieved to see the last of Faber's Pütts, and to be once again on the move.

We had buried eighteen of our comrades, and about the same number of the enemy, many more of them having been carried away by their own fellows and buried in Campbell and in the

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country around, as we found by the newly made graves which we passed as we advanced.

The principal approach to Campbell, which is about thirteen miles from Faber's Pütts, is by a road which leads up through a beautiful kloof or rocky pass, winding up for three or four hundred feet through thick bushes, and brilliant red and yellow cactus and other strange plants, making a most picturesque and refreshing scene after the flat, dusty road by which we had come. This would have made an ideal and almost impregnable fortress for the enemy to hold and bar our progress if they had had any inclination to make a stand, so we naturally avoided this road, and approached in extended order across the open country from another point of the compass.

This little irregular movement of ours must have quite upset the plans of the enemy, and we could see them in the distance rushing about on their horses, riding away as hard as possible to escape. By the time we arrived the place was deserted except for a few wretched-looking women and children, but there were many evidences of the recent hasty departure of the male population, who had not waited to welcome us.

There were two fairly big stores in Campbell, which were soon doing a lively business with the remnants of stock which they had been able to save from the farewell visit of the Boers, who had been so unceremoniously shifted from their lair. As usual these stores were owned by Hebrews, who made the most of their opportunity to rob poor Tommy, by charging famine prices for their miserable goods, which they had only so recently been giving away to their friends the Boers. We of the Yeomanry being the advance guard of the column were first to

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arrive and consequently got a fair share of what was to be had, after first making sure that the enemy had vacated these parts.

We soon had our camp formed on some old oat-fields adjoining the village, being joined later on by the Infantry, and waggons and guns, which had to be brought up by the main road through the kloof.

This little farming village of Campbell is charmingly situated at the head of the kloof, and overlooking a wide expanse of flat veldt. It is reported that Livingstone lived there for some time, and there are several comfortable bungalows where prosperous farmers have settled and made their homes. The night after we arrived there we were joined by another large convoy of supplies, and a strong detachment of Paget's Horse, who had come from Smidt's Drift in charge of the convoy, so that the usually quiet little village was alive with yelling Kaffir boys, cracking their long whips, and groaning to the oxen drawing the heavy wagons, rumbling big guns, mounted men and foot soldiers, stirring the thick dust of the roads into choking clouds, and gradually settling down into the position selected for them to form camp.

It was soon evident that we were to stay here only a very short time, and on the second night after our arrival a patrol of twenty men was selected to go to Griqua-town, which is thirty miles from Campbell, to scour and scout the country between. On the following day we all got orders to saddle up, and were soon leaving Campbell behind, only a portion of the Duke of Edinburgh's Infantry being left in a small fort which they had built of sand bags, to hold in case of attack.

We had a long, tiresome march of twenty miles that day to start with, we mounted men as usual acting as advance and rear

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guard and flankers (side guards), and having to keep a sharp look-out in case we should be attacked, and did not stop during the whole of that day until we arrived at a big hollow of dirty water called Rietfontein, where we arrived at dusk. We had had nothing to eat all day, so after watering and feeding our horses and getting them settled, as we supposed, for the night, we were soon busy filling the "dixies"—big iron cooking pots—with water, and foraging around for wood, which was very scarce in these parts, to make fires with.

No sooner had we commenced to get something to eat, than our worthy Serjeant-Major appeared on the scene with orders for twenty men to saddle up at once, to act as escort to Gen. Lord Errol, who joined us here, for a night-march to Paapkuil, a farm fifteen miles distant, where we should meet the patrol of twenty men who had gone to Griqua-town and come round this way. In about five minutes the twenty men were ready and formed up, all hopes of getting a meal that night being now entirely gone, and we trotted away on our fifteen-mile journey with what consolation we could get from the smell of the cooking pots preparing the meal for those who were left behind.

But there is something fascinating about a quick night-march, and as we trotted rapidly over the miles we forgot our troubles and hunger in the interest of the occasion, especially as it happened to be a fine moonlight night, and there was a spice of danger in the fact that we were a small party travelling through country where the enemy might be concealed, or had quite recently passed that way. As we approached the farm and store which was our destination, it was evident that there was a party of horsemen already occupying the place, but we soon ascertained

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that they were some of our own fellows who had arrived that evening from Griqua-town. After off-saddling and putting our horses into a large kraal close at hand, it was not long before we had a good fire going and something to eat, and made up for the loss of the meals which we had had to forego that day.

It is quite a fine farm and store at Paapkuil, which means grain-hollow or valley, and Mr. Wright the owner had evidently been a prosperous man, and had quite a pretty homestead with a good water supply, which is very valuable in these parts. But, unfortunately, the Boers had visited the place and, in fact, had only just cleared out, after ransacking everything in the store, and leaving nothing but a few parasols and patent medicines, of which we could have collected an unlimited supply during our wanderings over the country.

The hardest blow of all to the owner was the loss of a valuable racehorse, which had not escaped the notice of the Boers, and which had been the pride of the farm and well known at Kimberley and other race meetings. Probably some miserable specimen of a Boer had got the prize, and was chuckling at his good fortune in having a mount which could keep him well out of range if he should happen to run up against any British troops.

The next day the rest of the column came on from Rietfontein and joined us again, and it was here that the first draft of eight men and a corporal joined us, having been sent to replace some of those who had fallen at Faber's Pütts.

We did not stay long at Paapkuil, as next day the scouts brought in word that a party of the enemy was occupying a small village called Danielskuil, about sixteen miles farther

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on ; so we immediately saddled up, and were soon once more on the warpath, with the prospect of probable opposition before long. We marched all night through a steady downpour of rain, about as miserable and tiresome a march as any we experienced, many of the fellows being so thoroughly weary that they slept as they rode, starting up with a jerk if the horse happened to change its gait, or make a lurch so as to overbalance the rider, which quickly brought him back from his dreams to a sense of his real surroundings.

It is not possible for anyone who has not actually experienced this overpowering weariness to appreciate it fully—the fatigue of marching slowly through a country with absolutely no variety or distraction, not only all the day but through the night as well, with but little rest and little to eat, soaked through and through with the continual rain, is about as trying an experience as can be imagined, and made our little column in such a mood that it would have made things pretty rough for any enemy had they come in our path just then.

As we arrived in sight of the little village, every precaution was taken, and preparations made for attack in case the enemy were concealed in the houses or country around. We in the advance guard were well extended across the front, and could see figures in the distance hurrying here and there in alarm, evidently thinking that we were about to bombard them and smash up their homes. The first little farmhouse we came to was flying an old white towel conspicuously, and making a great show of peaceful disposition, and we soon came to the conclusion that there was no intention to oppose us, and that the enemy had moved on. Gen. Warren rode up, and after a little conversation with a

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storekeeper, seemed satisfied that the field was clear, and made preparations to remain there for the present.

We were allowed to occupy two small churches, and what empty houses and barns we could find, and were soon busy making ourselves as comfortable as our wet clothes and such habitations would allow. Under such circumstances it would seem like desecration to turn a church into a shelter for a noisy crowd of soldiers, and a pulpit into a cosy corner for a corporal to arrange his list of guards, &c.; but one has to make the most of whatever comforts present themselves at such a time, and accept the situation. The churches were very soon packed with an overflow congregation, each man selecting some spot on the floor for himself, where he could roll up in his blanket and possibly sleep before his turn came to go on guard.

All through that night a terrific thunderstorm raged, the brilliant forks of lightning which flashed around us completely dazing a sentry or guard, who had to turn out and do his two hours on duty, marching backwards and forwards in his appointed beat, unsheltered, and with fixed bayonet, ready to shoot at a moment's notice in case of alarm, in the blinding storm. As a matter of fact, such an alarm was actually given during the night in one part of the camp, and as a result, a foolish woman who left her house in the night and failed to respond to the challenge of the sentry in that part, was unfortunately shot; it being impossible to tell who was moving in the darkness of the storm. The whole camp paraded the next day to attend the funeral of the poor woman, who was buried with military honours.

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By this time the weather had cleared, and we were able to get dry, and take our horses on to a neighbouring hill to graze and rest. At the foot of this hill there is quite a large settlement of blacks (it being the headquarters of the Griqua tribe), living in their little round thatched cabins as comfortably and contentedly as if no white man had ever come that way to disturb their surroundings. One of the churches which we occupied was built for them, and they were very much upset at the idea of using their place of worship for such a purpose.

There was one big store there, but the owners had the same tale to tell as at most of the other stores of the country; almost everything had been carried off by the Boers, who were having a high old time riding from place to place, ransacking everything of any value, and getting fat on the pillage of stores and cattle, which they were able to plunder now without hindrance, so long as they could dodge the British troops. One or two of the houses in the village had some meal and flour which they made into loaves and pancakes, which were quickly bought up by the fellows at fancy prices, being an agreeable change of diet after the monotony of our regulation hard biscuits; but the supply was very limited, and we soon had to fall back again on Government rations to satisfy our healthy appetites.

There is a very interesting old hole in the ground here, from which the name Danielskiul or Daniel's Cave originates. It is said that the chief of the tribe in these parts was in the habit of throwing his prisoners into this deep hole after a fight, and leaving them to die there, which is about as horrible a fate as can be imagined, and rather different to the comforts enjoyed by the Boer prisoners at St. Helena and such places.

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After four days' rest, during which time Col. Hughes and the scouts had been scouring the country around to get information of the whereabouts of the enemy, we got orders to start again on the chase, and marched to a farm eighteen miles distant, where we bivouacked for the night.

It was a terribly bleak, uninteresting spot, and as it happened to be another cold, wet night, and the farm appeared to be deserted, we spent a very miserable night here. Two of the fellows while wandering around in the darkness for wood to make fires with, were so unfortunate as to walk into a well, from which they were soon assisted, but not before they were half drowned and badly scared.

Bivouacking at Blikfontein.

The next day we continued our march, and arrived in the afternoon at a fine farm called Blikfontein, fifteen miles from our last halt. There was no doubt here that the owner was an Englishman, and a prosperous man ; the fine bungalow, and the approach and surroundings, all showing a business-like management combined with comfort, which is seldom met with amongst the Dutch or Boer farmers. Even the country round seemed more promising than that through which we had passed lately, and there was a fine supply of water, which was apparently reliable and inexhaustible, and proved inestimably valuable to us during the four weeks we stayed there.

Mr. Donovan, the owner, had had some exciting times evading the Boers, who had visited his farm several times to try and make him join their commando. They had taken most of his cattle and stock, and had upset his farm considerably,

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continually paying him surprise visits, which kept him always on the look-out to avoid being caught himself. More than once he had only just time to escape from the back of the house as the Boers approached from the other direction; so he was very pleased to feel now that he could sleep in safety for a change, and know that his property and family were well guarded. Mr. Donovan and his wife and little boy and girl are good types of prosperous Colonials, and make one feel proud of one's nationality in contrasting such a family with the average Boer farmer.

They live happily and comfortably in this isolated part of the country, many miles from congenial and cultured society, the nearest being Kimberley, which is over a hundred miles away, and their nearest neighbours being either rough Boer peasants or small farmers, or the blacks who settle around every large farm such as this, and work on the farm.

The greatest drawback to the success of farming here is the risk of plagues of locusts, which sometimes come in clouds, settle on the crops, and in an incredibly short time strip every vestige of vegetation off the land. Nothing can be done to prevent them, and the consequences are most disastrous.

Mr. Donovan has a fine collection of ostriches, which pay well and do not require much attention, as they live on whatever they can pick up on the land, and only need a wire fence to keep them within bounds. He had also cultivated a large piece of land, and sown mealies (Indian corn), but either the locusts had come that way, or it had been a bad season, for the corn looked very straggly and weather beaten, which was disappointing to us, as mealies are good things to make into a variety of dishes, and

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would have been very acceptable to us while we were camped here.

Very soon after our arrival news was brought in that Colonel Hughes and his small party, who had gone in advance of the rest of the column, had cornered our late opponents, who had surrendered to him, and were on their way back to Blikfontein to deliver up their arms, and be dealt with according as General Warren should consider advisable.

BIVOUACKING AT BLIKFONTEIN.

The next day they arrived at our camp, a motley crowd of the dirtiest, lowest type lot of scoundrels one could meet with, mounted on a mixed lot of rough ponies, amongst which were many whites and greys, which are generally good workers, though they are conspicuous marks, and good targets. They had with them two wagon loads of ammunition, which, with their rifles and bandoliers were all heaped in a corner of our camp, and afterwards destroyed. They themselves were taken to another

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part of the camp, where they were detained two days while they were examined and identified; most of them being eventually presented with passes to go to their farms, and remain there, having to report themselves at certain times to the nearest police headquarters. During these two days and nights some of us were told off to guard them, and although they were unarmed it was no pleasant duty, especially at night time, to have to keep watch over such a murderous-looking crowd amongst the bushes.

Having successfully rounded up this lot, and reports from other parts of the country seeming to be favourable, we thought that we should be starting on our journey home before long, and many guesses were made at the probable date of our leaving the country, but we made very bad guesses, and had a lot of work to do and ground to cover before our turn came to think of going home.

Day after day we went through the same monotonous round of duties. It was intensely cold at night, and most of us would pair off with the fattest man available and roll up together in all the blankets, sacks, and clothing we could muster; and at reveillé, at 5-30 a.m., we woke to find our blankets covered by a heavy white frost, which helped to accentuate the appetite and chronic pangs of hunger. The first thing to do was to exercise the horses—which were kept in two large kraals close at hand—which we did by riding them and running with them in a large circle, soon getting rid of any stiffness, and warming up both man and horse. After about an hour of this the sun was probably rising, and cheering things up a bit, and we would get a short rest for breakfast, consisting of one or two hard biscuits and some coffee; the rest of the day would be

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spent at different fatigues, or taking the horses some distance away to graze.

There was one store about half-a-mile away, but as the Boers had cleared it out already four times during the war, it was not surprising that the owner had become discouraged, and determined to wait until more settled times before he re-stocked it—our usual luck.

We got very hard up for a change of diet during our stay here, and I think we felt the want of such little ordinary articles of food as bread and butter and such like at this time more than at any other time in the whole of our experiences. There was absolutely no chance to forage or loot in this district, everything having been taken long since by the Boers.

For a whole month we lived on the regulation rations, which must be so arranged as to allow for a man to forage for himself and provide a good portion of sustenance for himself, as it would be impossible to keep body and soul together much longer than a month on what is supplied by the authorities. We waited patiently day after day, almost as though we were besieged by the enemy, praying that some passing wagon might bring condensed milk or Quaker Oats, the two choicest and most convenient additions to our food supply when procurable, as we could stow them away comfortably in small tins into our saddle wallets. But we waited in vain, the only change that was possible in such an outlandish part of the country, far away from railway, transport and towns, was to issue to each man a portion of flour in place of the biscuits, and let him manufacture the best sort of food he could manage with the materials at his disposal. It might have been a happy idea if we had been able to get some

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fat or grease with which to cook, but as there was nothing in this line, it simply meant slow poison to the fellows, who turned out a variety of strange looking and stranger tasting messes, in the shape of pancakes, &c., the results of which was more work for the doctor, and the exhaustion of the supply of No. 9 pills.

While we waited here I had an opportunity to use my little shilling tin box of water colour paints, which I had bought in Worcester, Cape Colony, when we passed through there, and which I carried with me all through our marches, wrapped up with a small sketching block of paper in the remains of an india-rubber air-pillow, which protected my little pictures from dirt and wet, frequently being the only dry thing I had about me. I managed to save about fifty of these sketches of points of interest and events in our travels, and have reproduced a few of them in this record, and shall treasure what remains of this box of child's colours more than any fine collection of the best colours made, and also the memory of the many pleasant hours spent in this way, which helped so much to relieve the, at times, almost unbearable wearisomeness of long monotonous marches and tiresome garrison duties. One occasion particularly stands out brightly in my memory as a most agreeable and happy variation from the ordinary duties. While at Blikfontein, Lord Erroll, who was our Chief while Sir Charles Warren was away at Kuruman, where he had gone to appoint a magistrate, and get things settled down in that district, wanted a sketch made of his quarters and surroundings, which consisted of a large canvas awning, erected amongst a thick copse of small trees, being quite open on one side, and sheltering a couple of small camp tables, camp cots, and stools, not to mention a sprinkling of tempting

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looking bottles of refreshment, boxes of cigars, and some comparatively up-to-date literature in the form of magazines and periodicals, luxuries which seemed to belong to some other existence, and revived memories which had almost entirely faded.

The bright sun shining through the trees, and casting strong shadows from the awning and foliage, with bright little pieces of military red against the khaki uniforms of the General and his staff officers, with the loose arrangement of camp furniture, and a small camp fire cooking a meal close at hand, made an interesting study for a picture; and I spent a most enjoyable afternoon with my little box of colours and a sheet of paper, though perhaps the results would hardly be classed as high art; and as Lord Erroll is a man of liberal views, and evidently believes in handing round and sharing the good things which he may have had a better opportunity of carrying with him on such occasions, I soon found that a little knowledge—at all events in the art line—is a mighty useful thing to have; as my Chief not only kept me well supplied with whisky and soda and cigarettes while I sketched, but invited me to sit at table with them when tea-time arrived, which meant a good spread of bread and butter, milk in the tea, and such luxuries as we poor Tommys had long since dispensed with.

On Sunday, we had a cheerful service in the open air, a small choir being got together, and a few brass instruments which had been brought up on the wagons by the infantry, providing music which made a pleasant change. Our Chaplain, Mr. Rose, who had seen considerable service in the Soudan and elsewhere, was an exceptionally able and suitable man for such work, and helped to cheer things up for us while we

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stayed here by organizing camp fire concerts at night, and otherwise interesting himself kindly in our welfare.

These camp fire concerts are a great institution in camp life, an amusing variety of talent always being at hand ; almost every man having at least one pet song or recitation which he produces on these occasions, and there are seldom lacking sufficient volunteers to make an interesting programme, while an immense bonfire lights up the faces and forms of the crowd of listeners, who are always glad to join heartily in a good chorus, the great object at such times being to avoid getting that troublesome complaint commonly known as "the hump," and to make the most of whatever cheer presents itself. Our friends the Canadian Artillery, who were in camp here with us, were very valuable on such occasions, and certainly produced some of the best and most original selections, which were heartily supported and enjoyed by all. The pretty Canadian National Anthem praising the "Maple Leaf," a most tuneful and clever production, and which is so popular amongst all classes of Canadians, was one of the best and most appreciated of all the songs, and soon after we first heard it every man was humming or whistling it, and it seems a pity we don't hear more of it in England.

The Canadians were a smart, typical lot of well-built Colonials, evidently used to a rough out-door life, and quite in their element at this fighting business ; as good natured and cheerful a crowd as one could wish to meet, and a big handful to control in their love of unrestrained independence. A Company of Paget's Horse (the Jam Brigade) were also with us in camp at Blikfontein most of the time, and shared with us the privations and otherwise of these long weeks.

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June 30 —At this time a message came to say that a limited number of Yeomen would be allowed to join the Cape Police, and would be released from Yeomanry engagement for service in the Kimberley district. Pay seven shillings per day, with annual allowance of five pounds for uniform, duration of service three years, must shoot and ride well.

A list of names of those who were willing to join the Police was taken, but there was no contract made, and although a small party left camp for a day or two, it led to nothing, and we heard no more about it for a long time. For my part I think it would have been a very good thing for many of the fellows who have no profession or trade at which they are skilled, and little prospect of succeeding or prospering at home, to have joined the Police, and got well acquainted with the opportunities and possibilities of the country, besides being able to save most of their pay and the usual policeman's perquisites. A policeman's life can be made quite a happy one, and although there may not be any "pirates" in South Africa, the methods of the Boers on land very closely resemble the tricks of pirates, and they may be closely related, and can undoubtedly make things interesting and lively for our Mounted Police, and I have no doubt that if I had not left a good "billet" in England, to which I hoped to return before long, I should have been as eager as any to offer my services in such a capacity; the life with all its drawbacks has many attractions, and I still frequently long for the healthy, eventful life which our friend the Cape Policeman lives.

Living as we were in the open, exposed to all sorts of changes of weather, it was not surprising that our clothes, which we seldom got the chance to remove, being only too glad to wear all we

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could get hold of during these cold nights, were by this time showing the results of good hard service, and were either artistically patched with pieces of old sacks or ox-hide, or were left to freely ventilate the wearer, and to accommodate the multitudes of sociably-disposed insects which preferred the comfort and warmth of our underclothing to the discomfort of the hard frosty soil. Occasionally we would get an opportunity to go down to a wide ditch outside the camp, where we could strip and bathe, and maybe wash some of our clothing, but it was hopeless to try and keep clean, every man fighting in South Africa belonging to the same brigade, at all events in one respect, namely, the C.I.V., or "Covered In Vermin" contingent, a point which, although not reckoned or classed with big disasters or great battles, is not to be overlooked as one of the worst enemies and greatest annoyances in that unfortunate country. In their operations and tactics they worked with all the cunning and on much the same lines as their allies the Boers, concealing themselves behind the ridges and seams of our clothing, and only exposing themselves in such places as they knew it was impossible to get at them, or under cover of darkness at night, when they attacked us with all the ferociousness of desperate and hungry beasts.

We give the Boers a lot of credit for mobility and evasion, but they are fools to the common or garden African louse, who digs his spur into his victim's chest at one moment, and seems to be running down his leg the next. The worst of it was, these fiends were not indigenous to one part of the country only, but insisted on visiting us and chumming with us wherever we went —thin man or fat man, clean or dirty, old clothes or new, made

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no difference—there they were, snugly resting in a cosy corner or seam, or reconnoitring some new route seeking plunder ; and in fact they became so much a part of our every-day existence, that we quite missed them when we piled up our weather-beaten, war-stained garments, and saw the last of our faithful tormentors smouldering in ashes, and came back to clean civilian clothes and a happy land, where lice are not encouraged and have little opportunity to thrive. This little subject, though repulsive and as a rule best unmentioned, has played so conspicuous a part in the War, that it would be quite wrong to ignore it entirely, and at all events it will have been sufficient warning to any prospective travellers in that country to start with something stronger than ordinary insect powder, on which the African species grow fat and thrive.

We got very little news of any sort here, and seemed to have been entirely forgotten, as the weeks went by and we had no communication from the outside world. We were past the grumbling stage, and went through our daily duties in a silent, mechanical way, getting thinner and more ragged as the time passed. But at last communication was opened, and orders arrived for a party to start for Kuruman. This was the signal for a general break-up of the whole camp, and we were very soon making our way in different directions in small parties to garrison the prominent centres of that country and control the district. While the largest part of the column went on to Kuruman, in Bechuanaland, small detachments of about twenty men and an officer were appointed to go back to the towns through which we had already come, and to remain there until we got further orders. A portion of the 24th Company went to Griquatown,

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another portion to Douglas ; some were left at Danielskuil, and a troop of us went back to Campbell, where we selected a convenient position for camp, and soon had four tents put up not far from our old friends of the Duke of Edinburgh's Rifles, who had been left here to garrison Campbell when we first passed this way.

We did not camp on the same ground as on our previous visit, but selected a small avenue of peach trees, which had originally been part of a large fruit garden, the space between the rows of trees being sufficient to allow room for the tents, and for the horses to be fastened and to lie down comfortably close at hand if they wished. Just below our little camp was a fine stream of good water, which was collected in a pool, and dammed up in such a way as to allow it to run free at certain times and irrigate the gardens and plantations, which were arranged on the slope of the hill on which the village stands.

We were not the first to select this position for camp, as was very evident from the condition of the peach trees, which had been chopped and torn in places by some careless troops ; so that what had evidently been a flourishing fruit garden not long since was in places stripped bare, and appeared to be hopelessly destroyed. However, we could not afford to be sentimental over such things at such a time, and made the best use we could of the shelter and advantage of such a position. We soon had a strong entrenchment made of earth and big stones at one end of the avenue, the usual guards being on duty there every night—the other end of the avenue being sufficiently close to the little fort and camp of the Infantry to be guarded by them.

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As we were only a small party under one officer, who had chosen a well-sheltered corner close to the stream not far from our lines for his quarters, we soon came to the conclusion that our new camp was a decided improvement on what we had experienced during the past month at Blikfontein ; especially as the two stores in the village had been able to replenish their stock, and had plenty of variety in the way of Quaker Oats, syrup,

OUR LITTLE CAMP AT CAMPBELL.

tobacco, and such things as rejoice the heart of hungry Tommys after a long spell of Army rations. And what was even more pleasing still was the fact that a post cart arrived here from Schmidt's Drift and Kimberley, and also took our letters back twice a week, so that we were now in touch with the rest of the world, and gradually learnt what was happening elsewhere.

As the winter was now nearly over and the trees and vegetation began to look more green and fresh, and the enemy

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did not seem inclined to disturb us here, we settled down to a quiet garrison life, waiting and hoping to be called out again to join some column in another part of the country, and to see some more service before returning home. Every day patrols of three or four men would be sent in different directions to call on the farmers in the district, to see if they were keeping their agreement to remain peacefully on their farms ; to demand the passes of any persons they might meet travelling about the country, and generally to act as police in those parts.

There is a station of Cape police at the head of the Kloof at Campbell, where a small detachment of C.Ps. had their quarters, and assisted in the work of watching the movements of dissatisfied, troublesome rebels, who were numerous in the district. Opposite to the Cape Police quarters is the Post and Telegraph Office, a most important office from the fact that if any mischief was on foot by the enemy in that neighbourhood, the first thing they would do would be to cut the telegraph wire and cut off communication. We had several alarms of this sort, and had to turn out many times in the early hours of the morning to patrol the approaches to the village and guard against surprise.

Sometimes half our troop of mounted men would go for a long patrol round the country with our officer, staying away for three or four days and thoroughly scouring a large district, and calling at all the farms. Sometimes we were well received and could get some eggs and little additions to our food supply, but as a rule the farmers were sulky and ill-disposed towards us, and generally seemed to be very hard-up and thriftless. Almost all of them were Dutch and Boer sympathisers, and although we could not

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understand much of their language, their looks and reception of us were sufficient to show us in which direction their sympathies lay and to warn us not to be too familiar with them, as they were as a rule as treacherous and surly as they looked. There was one redeeming feature about these visits to the farms: we could almost always rely on getting a drink of coffee which, although we should call it very poor stuff in England, was very acceptable to us at these times, and seemed to put new life into us when we started again on another ride of perhaps eight or ten miles to the next farm.

All the farms and dwellings are very much alike, and are as a rule about as uninteresting and crude as it is possible to make them. There is generally very little in the way of architecture beyond four walls, sometimes a sloping corrugated iron roof, but more often flat and a chimney or two. The walls are generally built of home-made unburnt bricks of mud, plastered outside with mud and sometimes whitewashed. Invariably, on entering the door, the first thing that catches the eye is an elaborate family pedigree "Geboren," in a gaudy frame, hung in a conspicuous position over the mantelpiece or harmonium, which is the other piece of furniture without which no Dutch or Boer family is complete; throw in two or three clumsy, coarse-looking females in big sunbonnets, and a herd of unkempt, barefooted, dirty children, and you have the average Boer homestead. There is lots of room for improvement, and doubtless improvement will follow in the track of the more progressive people who will occupy and control the country. As a rule, wherever we came across a really comfortable, substantially-built bungalow or farm-house, the owner was either an Englishman or English Colonial, and we

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could be sure of a hearty welcome if the owner was there, and the best entertainment possible under the circumstances. But these occasions were very rare, as in most cases it was not safe for an English family to remain on their farm ; so they had generally gone either to some big town or even to England, to wait until the war was over or until they could be sure of returning and living in safety on their property ; and it can be easily understood that many such families have lost all their belongings in this way, roving bands of Boers having wrecked or stolen everything of any value which was left untenanted and unguarded.

Occasionally on these patrols we would come across some farm where the owner made a special feature of oranges and lemons, and had a fine grove or plantation of the deep green foliage, with either masses of the sweet scented blossom or thickly covered with luscious golden fruit, according to the season. We generally had permission from the owner to help ourselves, which did not make much impression on the abundance of fruit with which the trees were generally laden. Given a reliable water supply which can be turned on to the land for irrigation, and it seemed as if almost any kind of vegetation can be produced and will flourish abundantly ; but natural springs and rivers are scarce in these parts, what water there is being generally collected in a hollow and dammed up with a bank to prevent it draining off. In the dry season these big pools get very low and stagnant, and frequently dry up entirely, leaving the farm in a helpless condition and causing us to go long distances without water for our horses or ourselves.

Here and there some farm, well remembered by all the troops in that particular district, stands out more prominently than

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others in this retrospect, principally on account of the quality of the water, some pretty spot such as the Clarwater farm near Schmidt's Drift, where there was an unlimited supply of fine, clear water in pools amongst the rocks, and consequently rich vegetation, orange groves, corn and grass ; one of those green spots which so happily relieve the otherwise dry and unproductive soil.

We spent six weeks at this policing duty at Campbell, and by constantly visiting all the farms within a certain radius got to know the intentions and dispositions of the tenants, and managed to keep them orderly and prevent them going on the war-path again.

The local school once more commenced to ring its bell, which brought a swarm of little Dutch and English and half-caste and black children, as happy and lively as though there were no such thing as War, to the classes in a little plain iron building, where they could be heard repeating their lessons or singing, just as we hear them in our village schools at home. We generally finished the week with a football match against the Infantry on Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday we had a Church service in the little school-house, which with the aid of a harmonium and well-known hymns, always drew a crowded attendance.

There was great excitement one day, when a large body of horsemen appeared in the distance coming down one of the main roads approaching Campbell. All the field-glasses in the camp were soon turned on to the suspicious-looking strangers, and two or three of us were ordered to saddle up immediately to ascertain who they were.

Fortunately, we had no occasion for alarm, as they turned out to be a company of the Cheshire Yeomanry, who having been

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side-tracked for six months at Uppington on the Orange River, had got so heartily sick of such an uninteresting life and place, that they had joined the Police almost to a man, had been released from their Yeomanry engagement, and were on their way to Kimberley to make a new start—anything being preferable to stagnating in such an outlandish part of the country.

They were a smart lot of fellows, and it was not surprising that they had snatched at the opportunity to get into more serious touch with the War, and to see more of the actual country and people, for which they had given up so much at home and in whose interest they had come so far. We met some of them again in our marches in the Transvaal later on, and they were evidently quite well satisfied with the change they had made, though their new engagement tied them for a longer time than the Yeomanry were kept on service—their police contract binding them for another year from the time of enlisting.

On 2nd August, the following message came from Sir Charles Warren, who was leaving this part of the country :—

"On relinquishing the troops in the Western portion North of Orange River, General Sir Charles Warren, Military Governor, desires to express his appreciation of the admirable way in which they have behaved, both in action, in camp and in bivouac, during the three months they have been engaged in operations against the rebels in the pacification of the territory, which the Commander-in-chief considers to have been successfully carried out, and for the rapid termination of which His Excellency the High Commissioner has sent his congratulations. Sir Charles Warren desires to thank Sir Charles Parsons, staff commander,

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commanding officers, and all ranks for their good services during that period, and the great efforts made by supply, transport, medical and intelligence departments, telegraph service, cyclists, and scouts, which have contributed in so great a degree to the successful operations."

This was a valuable and flattering testimonial to our work in this part of the country, and we felt pretty certain that before long we should be attached to another active column, and should get still more severe work near the heart of the enemy's country. By this time we were getting a taste of real hot summer weather, and spent the greater part of our time taking the horses to the best grazing that could be found in the neighbourhood, letting them wander around and pick up what grass they could find, and getting in as good condition as possible in case we should be called away to join another column, which would mean starvation rations for horse and man.

When at last such orders did come for us, we saddled up and were off at a moment's notice, more as if we were going on another patrol than leaving the place for good, scarcely realising that we should probably never come back this way, and leaving everything behind except just what we could carry in our wallets. It was the usual uncertainty about our destination, and we quite expected to come back in a short time. But it was a lesson to us, and after this we were always prepared for sudden departures and unexpected moves, and carried all our belongings with us wherever we went, smuggling such treasures as magazines or Quaker Oats rolled in our blankets, which were carried on one of the wagons and distributed again at the end of the day when we halted for the night. Meanwhile, the greater part of the

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8th Battalion to which we belonged were doing valuable service, holding Kuruman and guarding and watching the country in that district, their services being so necessary and valuable that they remained there during the two months that we were wandering and fighting in the Transvaal, and joined us again in November at Modder River and Kimberley.

In Garrison at Kuruman, Bechuanaland.

Kuruman is the only village of any size and importance in this part of Bechuanaland, and consequently it is the centre and market for all produce in this enormous district, and a valuable position at such a time. The nearest town, Vryburg, which is situated on the border of the Transvaal and on the railway, is sixty miles away, and the only connection between the two towns is by horse and wagon or cart. Kuruman had already played a conspicuous part in the War, having been seized by the Boers early in the campaign. Then they were driven out, but again returned and besieged it, only overpowering the small garrison of twenty-five Cape Police, who held out against four or five hundred Boers by bringing up big guns, and with overwhelming numbers after a long siege forced the little garrison to surrender, and took them away prisoners. We met some of them afterwards when they had been released by the Boers, and they were evidently glad to be free, as they had had a rough time during the siege and as prisoners.

When we first arrived at Kuruman it was quite deserted, even the landlord of the little hotel having been taken away with the Cape Police by the Boers, and for a few days some of us were allowed to use the hotel and get shelter from the stormy weather

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at that time ; but it was not long before we had to camp outside and settle down to garrison duties. The Kuruman River runs past the town, and in one place enters a large cavern through a small opening. The water is very clear and quite warm, being fed by warm springs ; and in the dark cavern, with big bats flying round one's head, it reminds one of Rider Haggard's stories of these mysterious parts. Altogether it is quite a pretty spot, and we made good use of the splendid clear water to bathe as often as possible in it, many of the fellows taking the opportunity to learn to swim.

About five miles down the river is Livingstone's College and Missionary Station at Suding, where so much has been done for the natives in assisting them to live happily and peaceably, and to make good use of the land, which can be made to produce good crops where the river is turned on to the soil to irrigate it. Our duties consisted principally of guarding certain positions around the town, three men and a non-com. as a rule staying for several days at one of these posts and making themselves as comfortable as possible, each man being on guard in turn.

By this time the two stores in the town had got in a good variety of the usual provisions, and we were able to live fairly well, occasionally managing to forage around amongst the native quarters and pick up a few eggs and perhaps a chicken or two, and with plenty to eat in this way we managed to pass the time fairly cheerfully, especially when the postal authorities had found us and were able to send up our mails.

This is a bad country for fevers, and during our stay here our chief, Captain Kemp, had a bad attack of fever, and was seriously ill for some weeks ; but with careful nursing he pulled round

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again, and after a rest and change returned to camp not much the worse for his illness. Several of the fellows also had to go to the hospital, some of the more serious cases being sent away to the base hospital at Kimberley, where they were so well looked after that most of them returned to camp in a short time looking fat and well, and speaking very highly of the kindness and attention which they had experienced in the hospital, which was such a different story to the general impression held about the Army hospitals.

Strong patrols were sent away frequently to scour the country, and watch the movements of any of the enemy who might come that way; and as such work was decidedly preferable to the monotonous duties of garrison life, it was a privilege to be selected to go on patrol, as it meant a certain amount of excitement in watching for the enemy, combined with whatever sport the country afforded in the way of game, and in freedom from saddle inspections, serjeant-majors, and the like. A patrol party would consist of half-a-dozen of our own fellows, with two or three Cape Police and Cape Mounted Rifles, a wagon for supplies, and some Kaffirs for servants and guides. We would be away from camp for a week or more at a time, visiting the native villages—Batlaras, Gamopedi, Dekatlong, Tsinin, etc., and pushing up as far as the Karonaberg Mountains, getting all the information we could about the enemy in that district from the natives, besides replenishing our stock of provisions with eggs, chickens, etc.

It was very funny on such occasions to hear the attempts made by our fellows to speak the native tongue or even Boer, which is a cross between Dutch and all the native tongues mixed together

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and not easy to acquire. One word "Ikona," was conspicuous on such occasions, and might have meant anything from the reckless way it was used; anyhow, it seemed to have a wonderful power of influencing the natives, who always looked pleased and smiled, and produced the best they could provide at the mention of this magic word: as a matter of fact, it is harmless enough and simply means "No."

There were plenty of buck and partridges in these parts, so we were never at a loss for savoury dishes and plenty to eat, and occasionally got some practice at leopards, baboons, jackals, etc., at which we could sometimes get pot-shots.

In camp a special event was in preparation in the form of a sports meeting, the programme including competitions in all the Cavalry exercises, lemon cutting, heads and posts, tent pegging, Victoria Cross race, and foot races. For two or three weeks we practised at certain hours of the day, so that in the final contests the Yeomanry quite distinguished themselves, and won most of the events against the Cape Police, Cape Mounted Rifles, and 44th Battery of Artillery. This was one of the last events of importance of our long, tiresome stay at Kuruman, and on October 14 orders arrived for us to leave Kuruman, and we saddled up and were soon well on the road to Kimberley to join our old battalion and the column to which we were attached, and which had recently been doing good service and hard marches in the Western Transvaal.

With Gen. Settle in the Western Transvaal.

To return to our Campbell troop (Hardcastle's Horse), hardly had we received orders to make for the railway, than we had our

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again, and after a rest and change returned to camp not much the worse for his illness. Several of the fellows also had to go to the hospital, some of the more serious cases being sent away to the base hospital at Kimberley, where they were so well looked after that most of them returned to camp in a short time looking fat and well, and speaking very highly of the kindness and attention which they had experienced in the hospital, which was such a different story to the general impression held about the Army hospitals.

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horses saddled and trotted away from our pretty little camp among the peach trees, where we had spent seven very pleasant weeks, soon passing and leaving behind the scenes of our first severe experiences of campaigning and engagements with the enemy, and joining our partners of the 24th Company at Douglas. Our orders were evidently to lose no time and to get to the railway as quickly as possible, so we continued our journey as soon as the 24th Company was ready, and passing our old camping grounds at Rooipan, Windsor, and Richmond, we pressed on and arrived at Belmont on the evening of September 13, where a train of cattle trucks was waiting to take us to Vryburg—200 miles north. After boxing our horses, we spread our blankets on the floor of our humble apartments, and made ourselves as comfortable as such accommodation would allow.

We left Belmont at midnight, and rattled over the line which had been the scene of so much terrific fighting, and was even at this time treacherous ground and a favourite part for the Boers to blow up, which they frequently managed to do, making it exceedingly dangerous travelling. However, we had to run the risk of such things, and after passing through Kimberley, whose brilliant electric lights sparkled and lighted up the immense diamond mines which they guarded, giving a truly realistic impression in the distance of a land richly sown with gems, and later on passing over the temporary bridge, which had been so smartly built across the Vaal at Fourteen Streams by our troops earlier in the War—after the Boers had blown up the big iron bridge, which still remained in its damaged condition,—we arrived at Vryburg, and marched through the town to a large camping ground, where there was a fairly good supply of water for the

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horses and, what was especially attractive in the hot weather, a fine enclosed swimming bath about forty feet long, which we were allowed to use.

Vryburg is by far the largest town we had been in since we came up the country from Worcester, and has an air of business prosperity and importance about it which we had not seen for several months. There were thousands of troops here at this time, most of whom were waiting to join the same column as we were attached to under General Settle, who commanded the troops in the country between Kimberley and Vryburg, along the Western Transvaal, at that time, Lord Methuen being in touch with us in the Mafeking district, about a hundred miles north of Vryburg, while Generals Hunter and Hart and Rundle were operating east of us and along the river Vaal.

We remained in Vryburg nearly a week, making all the necessary preparations for many weeks of hard marching and probably considerable fighting, and as there were some fine stores which were well stocked with an almost unlimited variety of provisions in the town, we were able to lay in a fair supply of luxuries in the way of potted meat and coffee to carry with us. There are several small hotels and restaurants in the town, but everything in the way of liquid refreshment was strictly out of bounds for poor Tommy, who had to be satisfied to look in through the windows while civilians refreshed themselves, and wait for happier times.

This little interval at Vryburg was as nearly as possible "half-time" from the date of our arrival in the country in March, 1900, to the date of our leaving for home again in May, 1901, and the experience we had so far gained had not only been

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extremely valuable in its part in the War, but had also changed us completely from green amateur Volunteers to as valuable and capable soldiers as any veteran Regulars in the field, and we started from Vryburg on the second half of our campaigning as confident and well equipped as the most seasoned troops, knowing that we still had before us many months of hard marching and fighting in some of the worst of the enemy's country.

Most of those of our Company who had been on the sick list and in garrison at Schmidt's Drift since the fight at Faber's Farm (Crawley's Horse), including our Colonel of the 8th Battalion, Colonel Crawley, joined us here after three months' separation.

We left Vryburg on September 19 with a column of about 5,000 troops under General Settle and Sir Charles Parsons, consisting of four 15-pounders and two 50-lb. Howitzers of the Royal Artillery, six 12-pounders of the Royal Canadian Field Artillery, and numerous rapid-firing guns; a battalion of Munster Fusiliers, a battalion of the Somerset Regiment, and squadrons of Cape Mounted Rifles, Diamond Field Horse, Paget's Horse, Cape Police, Dublin Yeomanry, Westmoreland and Cumberland and Duke of Lancaster's; many scouts and ambulance parties, miles of ox wagons, mule wagons, Cape carts, hospital vans, and other vehicles, making up an interesting and impressive sight as we left the town.

Our first objective point was a small town about 38 miles east of Vryburg. in the Transvaal, called Schweizer-Reneke or Mamusa, which was surrounded and besieged by the Boers, who had done their utmost for the past thirty days to starve out and storm the handful of Munster Fusiliers and Police, who had been

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left to garrison and hold a small fort which stands on a hill overlooking and commanding the town. Fortunately, the garrison had been able, with the aid of an old-fashioned big gun and a Maxim, to keep the Boers at a distance ; but they were greatly relieved when we arrived and drove the Boers off and replenished their stock of supplies, which was by this time nearly exhausted.

It was only natural that with such an enormous number of ox waggons, and such a quantity of stores and baggage as we had with us, our progress was not rapid, and as we rode in extended order across the country in the advance guard, we frequently saw small parties of the enemy on ridges and kopjes, who just kept sufficiently far away to avoid being trapped, and always out of shooting range of our rifles.

It took us three days to reach Schweizer-Reneke after leaving Vryburg, bivouacking each night on fine farms on the road, the farm-houses being burnt before we left in the morning, as their owners were known to be away fighting against us, after having already on a previous occasion been captured, but allowed to go to their farms on the understanding that they should remain there. This privilege had been abused, and not only had the owners again gone on commando, but their farms had been used as headquarters and shelters for the enemy as recently as the night before we arrived on the scene. It seemed hard to destroy some of these good dwellings, but it was the only way to teach them a lesson, and prevent them gathering at such places and abusing the liberty which they had been given.

As we rode into Schweizer-Reneke there were very few people about, and it was evident that most of the better-class residents

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had left the town and were probably in the Refugee Camps waiting and hoping for the end of the War, when they could return to their homes.

During the four or five days that we stayed at Schweizer-Reneke some of us got permission to leave camp for a short time, and in wandering about the pretty little village found some of the deserted bungalows unlocked and still containing some good furniture and effects. One of these residences, I remember very distinctly, had evidently been the home of a prominent school-mistress, a lady with an English name and in comfortable circumstances. In one room there were several of the regulation children's copy-books, slates, and diagrams for teaching; in another room there was some very good furniture and a piano; but it was evident that we were not the first visitors to call since the owners had left, as almost everything had been thrown about and many of the things were broken.

The two stores in the place had the usual tale to tell, the Boers having just left before we arrived, leaving a marvellous document in the way of guarantee of payment for goods received and commandeered in the name of the Transvaal Government. What compensation the poor, miserable storekeeper will ever receive would be interesting to discover.

We made daily patrols into the country round and frequently saw parties of the enemy; but they kept at a safe distance, and had too much start for us to be able to round them up, and knew the country so much better than we did that they could always dodge us

On one of our patrols we came across a farm which had been the home of the famous Boer General De-la-Rey. There was

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still sufficient furniture, etc., about the place to make up a respectable bonfire, which in due course was piled up in the front drawing-room, and soon served as a warning, blazing beacon to Mr. De-la-Rey or his friends who might be in the neighbourhood.

Occasionally on these farm-burning expeditions we would be able to combine a little fun with the business, and after completely ransacking the place, would commandeer all that we could carry away with us, and return to camp to hold an auction amongst the fellows, who might be glad to bid for a good "billy" or cooking pot, or an extra blanket which we had been able to save from the destruction of some farm; but there was seldom anything worth carrying away, Mr. Boer having been very careful either to hide or take with him all his valuables, though he has had a splendid time amongst the farms and dwellings of our unfortunate kinsmen who had been compelled to forsake their homes, and there is no doubt that an immense amount of property, besides arms and ammunition, is hidden and buried all over the country, and there will be some surprising discoveries made in this way when the land is once more restored to peace, as in many cases the rightful owner will never come back to claim his own again.

The country we were now in was a decided improvement on Griqualand West —the grass was greener and more plentiful, the trees larger and more varied, and the general appearance more refreshing and attractive, which helped to make our long marches more interesting.

Leaving Schweizer-Reneke on September 27 we struck off in a southerly direction, thoroughly scouring the country, and searching and burning the farms over a wide area, as this was a

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notoriously bad district, and the rendezvous and home of some of the best known of the enemy's leaders.

We generally fared pretty well in these parts, being able to supplement the meagre rations supplied both for horse and man, as the farms had apparently not been disturbed for some time, and the ducks and chickens had had an opportunity to increase both in numbers and weight. Consequently towards evening, when the day's journey was ended and a suitable camping-ground had been chosen, most of the saddles of the mounted men would be adorned with fine, fat specimens of the poultry yard, and their horses' nose-bags would be well filled with potatoes, onions, and such like, which would soon be making a savoury pot cooking over the little camp fires, after the orders for the night had been attended to.

At the mid-day halt, which would generally be on some farm where young green oats or some cereal was growing, we would turn our horses loose amongst the fresh green blades and let them enjoy themselves for a time. They certainly did enjoy this change of diet, which at the same time helped to economize the supply of oats, etc., carried for them on the wagons. In the same way we would sometimes discover quantities of bundles of ripe and mature corn hidden away in lofts and barns, probably ready to be taken away and used by some commando of the enemy, who would be sadly disappointed when they arrived to find their treasure removed, and which would be immensely serviceable to us in feeding our horses.

As we travelled day after day over this open, fertile country, in the blazing heat of the summer sun, we could frequently see in the far distance what appeared to be beautiful lakes of water,

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and different scenes at which we never arrived, as they were merely reflections and mirages formed by the radiation and heat in the atmosphere. The grass and vegetation became so dry from the sun's heat that the country for miles around would burn for weeks, lighting up the scene and blazing like a sea of fire in the darkness of the night, and being of great assistance to the enemy at times when the wind was favorable to screen them in their attack, and hinder us from getting at them.

We now arrived at a spot on the River Vaal, a few miles below Bloemhof, but as our supplies were running short we did not visit Bloemhof at this time, but continued our march to Christiana and Fourteen Streams. All this part of the country is well known for its diamond diggings in the red gravel of the river bed and neighbouring district. We passed numerous old diggings which had been turned over and sifted repeatedly, and no doubt many fine specimens had been found and were still to be found here, but from what we saw of the solitary, hopeful individuals working here and there with a barrel of water and a sieve, it did not seem to be a particularly cheerful or prosperous business, though of course one could not expect business to be very brisk while war was being waged on all sides of the workers. There is something very facinating in diamond hunting, and many of the fellows kept mysterious looking bits of pebble and crystals, fondly imagining that they might possibly have found a gem of the first water, but real diamonds are not so easily picked up.

We camped about a mile outside Christiana, and were allowed to leave camp for a short time to visit the Post-Office, and possibly get a meal at the little hotel in the town. There was a

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strong garrison already in camp in the town, which had been the scene of considerable fighting, and had the appearance of being a place of some importance in these parts. Trees have been planted down the sides of the streets, and abundant water is brought through the town from the river Vaal by wide irrigation ditches like miniature canals, making the trees and vegetation

DIAMOND DIGGER AT CHRISTIANA, TRANSVAAL.

refreshingly green and healthy in contrast to the dry, dusty country around.

We soon left Christiana and continued our march to Fourteen Streams, which as a matter of fact has very little to recommend it, although there had been some terrific fighting in the neighbourhood. There is no town—merely a railway station, a

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store, and the famous wrecked bridge across the river Vaal. But there was no mistake about the importance of the position from the Boer point of view, as there were most elaborate and cleverly-formed entrenchments all along the river bank, in which the Boers had evidently lived for some time, and we could still trace the remains of ingenious devices for making their homes in these trenches as comfortable as it was possible to make ditches which were frequently half full of water.

About two miles from Fourteen Streams, on the opposite side of the river, is the town of Warrenton, which is connected with Fourteen Streams by a pontoon bridge, which is drawn across the river by a strong steel rope stretched from side to side. While we waited at Fourteen Streams to replenish our stores, we managed to leave camp sometimes, and would get some good bathing in the river, diving off the pontoon and bringing up handfuls of mauser clips and all sorts of ammunition from the bottom of the river, where they had evidently been thrown by the Boers in their flight to lighten their transport wagons. The little store near our camp at Fourteen Streams did a big business at this time supplying hot coffee, bread and cheese, and such luxuries—when we could leave our lines for a short time to go round there and visit an old boy named Brady, who owned the store and most of the land in the district, which included many valuable diamond diggings. At this time his property did not look particularly valuable, the few buildings and sheds that had existed before the war, were wrecked, and old Brady would discourse to us on his experiences during the past few months and the damage done to his property, which he hoped would be restored sooner or later by the British Government.

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Wagon loads of supplies were constantly being sent from one place to another in the neighbourhood, and as it was impossible to know the exact whereabouts of parties of the enemy, these supplies had to be sent under cover of night and with an escort of mounted men, which meant that a dozen or so of us would be roused out at midnight, to saddle up and ride to some appointed place, where we would meet another escort party and hand over the supplies to them.

The country is simply honeycombed with all sorts and sizes of holes—innumerable rats and rabbits and ant-bears and porcupines burrowing in every direction, and making the whole country a snare for our horses to break their legs, and a continual risk to us of breaking our own necks ; and it seems to have been purely a case of luck that there were not more accidents from this cause. More than once I have helped to pull a man from under his horse, which had stepped into one of these holes and come down with its rider, generally pinning him down with its full weight on his legs.

Almost the whole country, except in mountainous districts and where the soil has been irrigated and cultivated, consists of immense tracts of sandy soil honeycombed in this way, and covered with innumerable dome-shaped ant-hills about three feet high, which make excellent cooking ranges by scooping a hole out of the bottom and through the top, and building a fire therein.

Next to the ant the most common insect that came across us was an immense centipede, which looked like a huge, fat caterpillar nearly an inch thick and six or seven inches long, with a hard, jointed skin and hundreds of little legs—nasty beasts to sleep with.

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Buck are very plentiful, bounding about the country so lightly and gracefully in little parties of three or four, sometimes coming close to our lines, but easily scared and soon lost sight of with their sandy coats so similar in colour to the surrounding soil. Occasionally we would be able to shoot one, and they are excellent eating after having been kept for a short time.

During our stay at Fourteen Streams we were provided with some new clothes, of which we were badly in need, and which had to last us until we came down the country seven months later booked for home. We were funny-looking objects in our misfit, patched, and weather-stained clothes, not much like the smart, well-groomed, made-to-measure soldiers one meets at home. Every man was obliged to allow his beard to grow for want of opportunity to shave, which in most cases meant a dirty-looking, irregular patch of bristles varying from half an inch to two inches in length, which, with a well-worn, shapeless slouch hat, well perforated with ventilating holes, a flannel shirt which had done good and continual service in all sorts of weather for two or three months, riding breeches or slacks which might or might not have fitted at some time, and probably consisted more of additions of strange pieces of material than of the original composition ; and to complete the outfit a pair of Army boots, which when new give one the impression that they are everlasting ; but at this time, with two or three toes sticking out of the front, and with pieces of string tied round to keep them together, they certainly were entitled to be put on the retired list.

Each man was soon fitted out with a new kit, and with supplies to last us for several weeks, we started back over part of

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the same road by which we had come through Christiana and arrived at our old camping-ground, where we had previously met the Vaal below Bloemhof.

We had to be strictly on guard from this time, as the Boers still occupied Bloemhof, and were concealed in the woods along the river bank. One of our scouts had been shot by a sniper, and stray horsemen were frequently seen around the neighbourhood, evidently watching our movements and communicating with their commando, somewhere close at hand. As we came up to Bloemhof, the Boers had just vacated it, leaving it almost completely deserted; many of the women and children having evidently gone away on their waggons with the commando, and the houses and shops were all locked up. It is a typical little Boer village, and had always been a rendezvous and stronghold of the enemy, where they could gather without much fear of being disturbed as a rule, as it was off the usual track of our columns. We stayed there two days, quite expecting to be attacked, but the Boers had other plans, and waited for us under cover of the thick woods along the river. Before we left Bloemhof, we burnt and destroyed the houses of those who were known to be ringleaders of the enemy and who lived there, leaving a warning in the village that the whole place would be destroyed if the enemy were allowed to make it a headquarters again, which threat was carried out by Gen. Hunter soon after.

We crossed the drift over the Vaal, which is about 80 yards wide here, but quite shallow at this time, it being well into the following day before the immense line of wagons and men and guns of the column were all across the river, by which time we of the advance guard were several miles ahead of the rear.

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Leaving the river Vaal and marching cautiously through the well wooded country, which is like a fine big park here, stretching for several miles from the river, we were prepared to be attacked at any time ; but in a few hours we left the wooded country, and came out again into the old style of flat, sandy open country, to which we were more accustomed, and where we could see better what was ahead of us. We visited several farms, but they were all deserted, here and there we would find not only the household goods left to take care of themselves, but the poor beasts of live-stock, pigs, chickens, and such like, lying around dead for want of proper care and food, the owner having evidently left the place in a hurry some months previously.

We arrived at Hoopstad on October 18th, with an enormous quantity of sheep and cattle, which we had collected as we scoured the country, the poor beasts being in a wretched state for want of rest and food, which they were not able to get while they kept up with us on the march. We left them behind when we started on the march again two days later, and suppose they were driven down to Kimberley after a short rest at Hoopstad.

A fairly large stream, called the river Vet, flows through Hoopstad on its way to join the Vaal close to Bloemhof. It was very dirty and unsavoury at this time, and we were warned against drinking it, but managed to get a bath in some fairly deep pools a short distance from the town.

The chief point of interest in Hoopstad is an imposing newly built church, with a rather fine clock tower. The town is quite an important central market in the district, and the stores were fairly well stocked, but as it is such a long distance from the railway, and there was so much risk in bringing supplies across

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the country, the store keepers were not over eager to part with what they had, and the prices were naturally high. The town was in the hands of a fairly large garrison, and the church had been turned into a hospital, of which we unfortunately had need not long after. Previous to our arrival, the Boers had kept up a continual siege, making frequent attacks, but always being driven off, and the garrison were much relieved at the arrival of our column, which would necessarily draw the attention of the enemy and keep them away from the town. Our first night in Hoopstad was very uncomfortable, heavy rain and thunderstorms drenched us to the skin, making it impossible to sleep, and converting our camping ground into a sticky swamp—men, saddles, horses, and everything being covered with mud by the time we had to saddle-up and continue our march in the early morning. These heavy rain storms were very unpleasant while they lasted, but they had their advantages in laying the dust, which blows almost unceasingly across the country, and in providing pools of water for ourselves and our horses to drink. A few hours' march from Hoopstad brought us to the river Vaal again, and from this time until we came back to Hoopstad, we were more or less continually under fire, being sniped at and having smart skirmishes with the enemy, who were protected by the thick growth of trees on the opposite side of the river.

By way of a little variety in place of thunderstorms, our first night's halt was enlivened by the enemy periodically opening fire amongst us in the darkness, keeping us fairly "strung up," as the orders came for us to "stand to our horses," the poor beasts being badly scared by the bullets whistling close to them. It was a great relief when morning came and we could see what was going

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on, and we soon heard that we had been let off very lightly compared with the troops in the rear of the column.

A picket of Cape Mounted Rifles who had been left to guard a portion of the convoy, which was in distress and separated some distance from the rest of the column, had been overwhelmed by the Boers, nineteen of them being wounded, and two wagons loaded with supplies, having been captured and taken away by the enemy, before assistance could be given.

This was bad news indeed, and showed us that there were large numbers of the enemy close at hand. During the following morning we discovered a party of the enemy waiting for us hidden amongst the trees at a bend of the river, and quickly dismounting we took up a position on a ridge which commanded the bend, sending in such hot volleys that the Boers were glad to leave their cover and galloped away out of range, two or three of them who were evidently hit, being assisted by the others who supported them. We continued our march and halted at a large farm known as Elizabeth Rust, where the women folks turned out to have a look at us, but there was little doubt about their feelings towards us, and it was soon made evident that our General had information which was sufficiently condemning against the owners of the farm to warrant its destruction, and in a short time most of the furniture, etc., was piled up inside and a light applied, a few beds and necessities being all that the owners were allowed to remove.

A few miles farther on a despatch rider brought word from General Hunter, who was holding a drift a short distance up the river, that we should return to Hoopstad, probably to act as a bait and draw the attention of part of the enemy from him, and

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give him an opportunity to attack the Boer General Botha who was commanding the enemy in those parts, which he did very successfully a short time after.

Meanwhile we commenced to retrace our steps, being frequently sniped at from the other side of the river, and halting at a drift, where we scattered a bunch of the enemy by turning on a Maxim gun, which peppered their hiding places and made it too warm for them to remain. During our halt at this drift two Boers appeared some distance on the other side of the river, one of whom carried a large white rag tied to a branch which he waved as they approached the river. They evidently wished to speak to our General, and had waded half-way across the river when they were shot by some of their own men hidden amongst the trees, one of them was killed on the spot and the other died soon after he got across to our side from a bullet wound in the mouth, so we never knew what had been their intention. A few miles farther on we again halted and opened fire with our big guns on a large body of the enemy who were hanging around within a few miles on the other side of the river, evidently watching for an opportunity to pounce on some part of the column which might be insufficiently guarded or delayed by weary oxen. We made quite a long halt here, and a party of us were ordered to cross the river and search through the woods on the other side. This was a very risky job, as our recent experience had shown us that the enemy occupied these woods and would probably give us a lot of trouble, but with their usual cunning they managed to get clear away before we could get across, and we searched their recent hiding places in vain, though we found numerous evidences in the way of ammunition and the remains of small fires to show that the enemy

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had quite recently occupied positions here. After pushing our way on foot through a mile or more of dense undergrowth and woodland we were ordered to return to our horses which we had left on the outskirts of the woods and recrossed the river to join the column again, much disappointed at not having come across some of the enemy. All the time we were with this column, we of the Yeomanry held the chief posts of honour on the line of march, being either in the advance or rear guard or on the flanks, the most exposed and responsible positions in the column of troops, and which receive the first attention of the enemy, being practically the scouts and eyes of the Army, and giving the first alarm when the whereabouts of the enemy is discovered, and we received the highest commendation from our General at this time for our successful work in these positions. As we approached the farm at Elizabeth Rust, we soon found that our return was quite unexpected as, on turning a corner of one of the farm buildings, some of us suddenly surprised a female mounted on a high ladder against a wall, waving and signalling frantically to warn some Boers who were in the neighbourhood, and too close to us to be safe for them ; the consequence was the rest of the homestead was destroyed and a Maxim gun was turned on to the woods, clearing out any who had taken shelter thereabouts.

Stiff Engagement with the Enemy outside Hoopstad.

We were now within a few miles of Hoopstad, and during a halt for a short rest in the afternoon, we fancied we could hear a lot of shooting somewhere in the distance, which grew unmistakeable in a very short time, and we waited anxiously to know what was happening.

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We had not waited long before a man appeared riding hard from the rear of the column and quickly summoned us to return to the assistance of the rear guard, who had been attacked by an overwhelming body of the enemy. Some of them had been left to destroy the last farm before leaving the River Vaal, and had become detached too far from the main body; the Boers, who had evidently watched our movements keenly and being incensed at our farm burning, seized the opportunity to make a desperate attack on those who had been deputed to do this work, and notwithstanding the terrific fire from two Maxim guns which our men had with them, the Boers made such a determined attack that they killed or wounded every man attached to these guns and took the guns away with them ; fortunately our fellows had been able to destroy the working parts of the guns, so that they were useless to the enemy. Not satisfied with their success the Boers, who had been strongly reinforced, and were led by such well-known officers as Viljoen, Du Toit, Potgieter, and De Villiers, continued to follow up their gain, and evidently intended to cut off the rear of the convoy of which we were in charge. They still remained under cover of the thick woodland which reaches some distance from the river, but were now on the same side of the river as ourselves, and pressing close to our right flank. On the line of march some of us, with our officer, Lieut. Hardcastle, had been guarding the left flank, but on receiving orders to go to the support of the right flank we immediately galloped as hard as our horses could take us for about two miles to the rear of the column and to the opposite flank, where we soon found that we had the range of the enemy and opened a hot fire at eight hundred yards, the enemy's bullets dropping thickly amongst us as we lay on the

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open ground without any sort of cover. Fortunately our officer had quickly taken in the situation, and took up a position which completely checked the advance of the Boers, and after about an hour's hard shooting we had the satisfaction of driving the enemy off and preventing them carrying out their object. By this time it was getting quite dark, and it was impossible to find those who had been wounded earlier in the fight. Two of our own fellows were badly hit and were taken in the ambulance, and we were lucky not to have had more casualties during this short engagement, as we undoubtedly had the hottest corner and probably saved the convoy. Altogether, during the engagement, we lost 23 killed and about 80 wounded, which is a big loss for a comparatively small engagement. An ambulance was sent out in the morning and found many dead and wounded Boers besides our own poor fellows; the wounded had had a terribly hard night and were brought in to Hoopstad. After we had satisfied ourselves that the enemy had had enough, we took up our original positions again and in a few hours were back on our old camping ground at Hoopstad, and were able to rest for a few hours in comparative comfort and security, which was a relief after the constant anxiety and strain of our recent marches and fighting.

We did not stay long at Hoopstad, and were glad to find when we started on the march again that we were heading S.W. en route for Boshof and Kimberley. It is a long, wearisome march over a flat, uninteresting country to Boshof, and most of the time we were half-drowned with heavy rainstorms which made the road almost impassable for the oxen with the extra weight of mud on the wagons. At night the lightning was fearful, and if we

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lay in one position on the ground for a time we would wake to find that our bodies had sunken into the ground and that there was a pool of water three or four inches deep all around us. We were not disturbed again by the enemy, and after leaving a few of our fellows, whose horses were completely done up, at Boshof, we continued our march, and soon saw once more the brilliant electric lights of Kimberley, sparkling in the distance, as we camped about eight miles outside the town. We arrived back in Kimberley on November 1st, our horses and ourselves pretty well exhausted, and quite expecting that we should have at least a few days rest, but such was not to be, and we immediately set to work to change our horses at the remount camp, where our faithful steeds were turned in for a well-deserved rest and we had to part from our old friends who had done such good service and to whom as a rule each man had become deeply attached. There was no mistake about the urgency of the need of a change of mount in most cases, and as we filed past the officers at the remount camp our poor old steeds presented a sorry appearance and showed the results of six or seven weeks of hard marching on short rations. I was sorry indeed to part with my dear old friend, Nanki-Poo, an exceptionally useful Hungarian horse, and as kind and well behaved as any thoroughbred, but he was fairly groggy, and I was given a pretty, wild, fat, little mare, apparently of native stock crossed with English, not over-blessed with intelligence, and who took a mad delight in bolting with me on the smallest excuse, the curb bit having about as little effect on her mouth as spurs and curses had elsewhere. However, she was not spiteful, only headstrong and excitable, and we soon got to understand each other, and as she had a most comfortable, fat,

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round back, and was very surefooted and strong, these things atoned to a great extent for her failings. The same night we entrained and were hurried away down the line to Honey Nest Kloof where another column had been formed, and early the next morning we were again on the march with squadrons of Cape Police, Cape Mounted Rifles, Munster Fusiliers, Dennison's Scouts, and four twelve-pounders of the Royal Artillery. It was another case of relieving a garrison, this time at Koffyfontein, where the Boers had besieged the garrison for several weeks, the whole of this part of the country being thick with small bodies of the enemy, who were continually prowling about watching for an opportunity to pounce on a small garrison or weakly-guarded convoy.

We arrived at Koffyfontein on Nov. 3rd, and found a small garrison guarding the machinery and property of the rich diamond mines which exist there, and which the Boers were very anxious to destroy. The garrison was fairly well provided for and quite confident of being able to take care of themselves, so after leaving them sufficient supplies we left Koffyfontein and marched to Witteputts. We were continually sniped at, and all the mounted troops turned out to scour the neighbouring country. Several prisoners were brought in, and it was evident that we were watched by patrols of the enemy whose commandos were not far away. The nights were now gloriously bright in the full moon, which made it all the more necessary to be well screened, especially when on guard, as the enemy continually sniped at the sentries and scared the horses with their shooting. Very early one morning the Boers had crept up close to our lines intending to get possession of the bank of a large dam, behind

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which they would have been well screened in attacking our camp, but fortunately for us they had failed to notice a strong picket of our troops who had seen them approaching, and allowed them to get so close that they could hear the orders of the Boer officer, before they let them have a volley which killed and wounded several of them, one of the killed having every appearance of being the officer who led them. It was just previous to this that the garrison at Jacobsdal, which is in this neighbourhood, had been so foully murdered and badly cut up by an arrangement between the townspeople who had treacherously pretended friendship with the garrison, but who in reality were intriguing with the enemy outside the town to take advantage of their confidence and friendliness, and to assist them in a desperate and murderous attack, by which so many of the garrison were killed.

We arrived at Jacobsdal on Nov. 8th, but left again on the next day, returning to Koffyfontein and thoroughly clearing the intervening country of the enemy. We came back to Jacobsdal and marched through to Modder River Station, where we entrained for Kimberley. Meanwhile, a small detachment of twenty-five men under Lieut. Huntington, who had recently come down from Kuruman, had been having some excitement and a pretty rough time at Belmont, where they had been sent to watch those parts and gather all the information they could of the enemy's movements, strength, etc. To do this it had been necessary to split the small party into sections to patrol the country in different directions, and as the enemy were known to be lurking about all over these parts, it meant that our fellows, who were the only troops in that district, were kept continually on guard and got very little rest by day or night during the time

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that they were on duty here, and they were much relieved when orders arrived for them to return to Kimberley.

The Whole Company meets again in Kimberley.

The whole Company was now altogether in Kimberley after a separation of nearly four months, and we had a well-deserved rest of seven days, sleeping under canvas and being allowed to visit the town and get a good meal and a fresh supply of supplementary rations to carry with us on our next march. Our camp was about two miles away from the town, but brilliantly lighted by the powerful electric lights which guard the mines and illuminate the neighbourhood for a considerable distance. An immensely powerful search-light was operated from a high skeleton tower in the town, moving in a circle and throwing a strong light which could be seen forty miles away, and during the siege of Kimberley this tower and light had necessarily been a conspicuous target for the enemy's big guns, but had fortunately not been injured. Some of us were allowed to leave camp to visit one of the big diamond mines which is worked in three or four different sections in different parts of the town. In one place we were taken to the "compound" or native reservation, where all the blacks employed in the mine live together. It is a large open space, about 100 yards in diameter, and enclosed with a high fence, against which a long row of corrugated iron huts has been built for the natives to live in. They are fine-looking men, many of them splendid big Zulus and Basutos, and as it was Sunday afternoon when we visited the mine, they were resting and amusing themselves as they pleased. Some of them put on their war paint and decorated themselves in

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their tribe feathers and adornments, and danced a fiendish looking war dance, chanting and gesticulating as they had been accustomed to do in their old war days. There was an excellent hospital and open-air bath attached to the "compound," and everything appeared to be clean and orderly, and the natives happy and well-cared for. We saw thousands of pounds worth of diamonds passing from one stage to another, from the clumsy looking machinery ceaselessly crushing the blue rock which holds the precious stones, to the beautifully cut and polished finished gem, and it seemed as if they might very well have spared us a few without missing them.

There were numerous signs of the recent siege still around, holes in the big greeny-blue heaps of débris from the mines, in which sometimes twenty or thirty people had lived together while the enemy's 100-lb. shells were bursting into the town, but there was little need for alarm at this time, and the fine shops in the two main streets, Jones Street and Du Toit's Pan Road, were doing good business with Tommy, who did not often have such a chance to spend his money. We made the most of the few days we remained in Kimberley, being completely fitted out with any new kit we required and getting ready for the next move on the war path.

We left Kimberley on November 17th, going by train to Graspan, and marching to a big farm called Ramah Springs, which we made a centre for operations for a few days. Several commandos of the enemy were moving about this district, under the directions of Judge Herzog, who was supporting De Wet and supplying him with horses which they commandeered in the district. We made patrols for long distances during our stay

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here, but did not succeed in trapping the wily enemy, who took to the hills when we approached, and remained under cover until we had passed, sniping at us when they got the chance.

Every night our pickets had to climb the rugged, stony kopjes, which rise abruptly out of the ground like miniature pyramids, walking for a mile or two over big loose stones and climbing amongst huge boulders, until we got to the top, where we would remain on guard until the morning. The utmost care and precaution was taken to avoid being surprised by the enemy, who were known to be in large numbers in the neighbourhood. Guards were posted in extended order round the camp at night, not a word was spoken above a whisper, and our orders were to fire without warning at any moving object, which order unfortunately resulted in one of our own fellows, who was coming out with a relieving picket, in the early morning before it was light, being shot, though luckily not very seriously.

Our comrades of the gun section, whose very capable and popular young officer had been given a commission in the Dragoon Guards, and who up to this time had formed a little squad to themselves, were now disbanded as a gun section and attached to the different troops. The wheels of their rapid firing guns, which had had some rough service, now completely giving way, and the guns being presented to the armoured train from Kimberley.

So ended the career of what had been a most valuable branch of the Company, and to whom, no doubt, much credit is due for saving the situation in the attack on our camp at Faber's Pütts in May.

Our column now started on the march again, the report being that the enemy held a strong position between us and Luckoff, a

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small township about forty miles south. The first night's halt was on a fine farm belonging to a Dutchman, Van der Merwe by name, who was evidently equally agreeable and accommodating to the enemy or ourselves, according to which side was in possession. He and some others were brought along with us, under guard, when we started again in the morning. As we approached

ENGAGEMENT WITH ENEMY OUTSIDE LUCKOFF.

Luckoff, the road led through a gap between a range of kopjes on the left hand, and a long ridge on the right, two positions which formed a fine natural screen and fortress for the enemy, who were easily to be seen against the sky-line taking up positions to oppose us. The flankers on the left of the column were the first to come under fire, from a high kopje which they skirted

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and round which they galloped in fine style, shooting and driving the enemy from their positions above. At the same time our big fifteen pounders started dropping shrapnel over the enemy's heads, which effectually shifted them and kept them on the run.

A strong party of the enemy was now seen working round on the right, which was the signal for our right flankers and their support to advance and check them. At a given point they were given the order to dismount, fix bayonets and charge up the ridge, on the other side of which the Boers had been advancing. This they did in fine style, but unfortunately the enemy had got scent of our near approach and galloped off, so that by the time we got to the top of the ridge they had got a good start and were safely out of range. After this they evidently concluded that they had no chance and cleared off, taking several of their killed and wounded along with them. There had been seven or eight hundred of them, under Herzog, who had been in possession of this district for some time, the magistrate and garrison which had been previously left to guard Luckoff, having been obliged to evacuate the little town and retire to a safer position.

The Boers were boasting that they had murdered many of the blacks who they imagined had assisted us, and it was a great relief to the people when they knew that the Boers had been driven away by us.

We did not remain long in Luckoff, but after appointing a new magistrate and leaving a police guard, we continued the march, passing through a good grazing country, which had been fairly well settled by prosperous farmers. We had to burn several of the farms where the owners were known to be away on commando, and it was during one of these farm burning expedi-

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tions that some of our fellows were surprised, and ran a great risk of being shot down by Boers who were hidden amongst the rocks overlooking the farm. This was one of those instances of cunning which has been so common amongst the Boer women, and which has in so many cases led to disaster. On being told that their wagons and carts would have to be destroyed, and asked to show were they were kept, a woman led the way through the garden, knowing well that the men belonging to the farm were waiting under cover close at hand to trap our fellows, and it is a wonder that they were not all shot. Fortunately they managed to get under cover of a wall around the garden, and gradually got away uninjured, but it was playing the game very close.

By this time we had collected an enormous quantity of sheep and cattle, which were brought along with us, but the poor beasts became so terribly exhausted with the marching that they had to be left to follow up in the rear of the column, where they were naturally a bait for the enemy, who swooped down periodically, and cut off bunches of them, driving them away into the hills before assistance could be given to the rear guard or they could be recovered. In this way we passed through the old district of Boomplatz, where in the previous war with the Boers in '57 there had been some memorable fighting. We had several days of continuous rain which made the country fearfully heavy, and the strain on the oxen attached to the wagons so great that they died on the road by the dozen and delayed the march considerably; this was particularly unfortunate just now, as we were running very short of supplies, and it was evident that the General was a bit anxious

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lest the enemy, who still dogged our steps in large numbers, should make a combined attack on our rear and give us a lot of trouble. However, we managed to get to a convenient point where the thousands of sheep and cattle which we had collected were sent under a small guard to Jagersfontein to be shipped by train to other parts of the country, while we continued our march to Edenburg, where we arrived on December 5th, glad to be once more in touch with the railway, and able to relax a bit after the constant strain of guards and hard marching in a part of the country which was still overrun by large numbers of the enemy, and where we had recently experienced so much bad weather. We were now on the main line to Bloemfontein and Pretoria, but still had a long roundabout march before us *via* Dewetsdorp and Thaba'nchu before we arrived at Bloemfontein.

The chief incident of interest to us at Edenburg was a false alarm read out to us in "orders" that those of us who wished to return home should make application in writing to the Colonel. The consequence was that the whole Company sent in applications, and a parade was called and addressed by the Colonel, who said that the applications would be sent to the Commander-in-Chief, but nothing more was ever heard of the matter.

After three or four days rest at Edenburg, during which time we were able to replenish our supplies at the stores in the town, preparatory to continuing the march and assisting in the chase after De Wet, who was in the neighbourhood, we took our positions on the column and started on the march again, reaching Reddersburg a few hours later. There had been some big fights in this district, and the town had changed hands several times during the War, first the Boers, then the British getting possession,

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so that when we entered the place most of the houses and stores were deserted and nailed up, and there was little stirring. Early in the morning after we arrived, a report was brought in which caused us to turn out immediately, all the mounted men riding out to a distant ridge of hills to reconnoitre, De Wet being expected to pass somewhere thereabouts. However, we did not manage to come across him, and should probably have been too small a party to tackle him had we met him, and returned to Reddersburg the same day. The next day the whole column continued the march, and we halted the first night at a gap in the ridge of hills which we had visited on the previous day, keeping well in the shelter of the hills, and every available man being on guard in extended order round the camp, prepared to give De Wet a warm reception if he came our way. We heard next day that he had slipped through during the night with a few of his men on the other side of the ridge, and we had just missed him. This was very disappointing, and as we continued our march next morning, we distinctly saw the trail of the Boers, and the remains of a small laager on a farm close by where they had stopped to feed their horses, cutting the telegraph wire to prevent their movements being made known. General Knox and other columns were hot on their heels, and we saw their columns moving in the distance as we advanced. Just previous to this, De Wet with four thousand men had besieged the garrison of four hundred men of the Gloucester Regiment at Dewetsdorp, who, after almost continual fighting for a week, had been obliged to surrender, the Boers having cut them off from their water supply and surrounded their position. De Wet had taken them away prisoners, but after two or three days terribly hard marching,

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during which time he was being chased by General Knox and others, he was compelled to leave them, and they were soon picked up by the pursuing columns. As we approached Dewetsdorp just after this event, we found numerous evidences of the recent hard fighting, all sorts of ammunition, pom-pom shells, bits of uniforms, cooking utensils, &c., which had belonged to the

DEWETSDORP.

combatants. On the steep incline which overlooks the town, and on which the garrison had been entrenched and camped, the ground was strewn with cartridge cases, ammunition, and the belongings of the captured garrison, and showed the results of the desperate fighting which had taken place and all the signs of a stubborn resistance. We camped close alongside the old

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position, but were not allowed to go into the town, which nestled in a hollow below our camp. From what we could see of the little town, it had the appearance of being well laid out with small residences, a hotel and a picturesque church with a high spire ; there was plenty of water in a large pool close by, and the country around looked fresh and grassy, and valuable for stock raising.

From our camp we overlooked a wide valley in which De Wet had owned an extensive farm, which had been destroyed some time during the war, for which act he was now having his revenge, and happened to be very generally successful in his methods.

We remained here for several days, making long patrols, and sometimes seeing parties of the enemy with their wagons trekking in the distance, and generally disappearing amongst the hills on the other side of the valley. The big mountain at Thaba'nchu stood out conspicuously as an outpost of the distant range of mountains in Basutoland, about thirty miles distant, and we were continually sending and receiving messages by heliograph from our camp to the camp at Thaba'nchu. On returning from a night patrol on one occasion we suddenly came on a small gathering of three Boers, who immediately threw up their hands and were promptly attached and brought back to camp. One of them, who was dressed in a Norfolk jacket, knee breeches, and stockings, and had the appearance of being a man of some intelligence and importance, was kept under strict guard and taken with us to Thaba'nchu, where we arrived on December 17th. There was a report that he had tried to escape and had been shot, but we never heard reliable facts of the case. We only stayed

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one night at Thaba'nchu, marching again in the morning, and halting for a mid-day rest at the famous waterworks, an ugly big building of corrugated iron, which supplies Bloemfontein with water, and which happened at this time to be supplying the garrison, and incidentally passers-by with beer. We were now only about twelve miles from Bloemfontein, but as the horses and

THABA'NCHU.

oxen were tired, we halted for the night about five miles outside Bloemfontein, and close to Sanna's Post. The next morning we passed through the deep cutting at Sanna's Post, where the Boers had surprised and cut up the Artillery earlier in the War, and were soon marching through Bloemfontein to a camp about a mile beyond the town on the opposite side to which we had arrived. It was

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soon apparent that our stay here was likely to be cut short, and we might get orders to move at any moment, but as it was so near Christmas, we expected that we should spend Christmas Day at Bloemfontein, which would be a bit more festive than it would be in most parts of the country. There was even a small Dramatic Company performing at the Theatre at this time, and a few of us were given passes to visit the town at certain times, which we were glad to do.

There are many interesting features about the town, which possesses some good streets of shops and business houses, in the centre of which is the Market Place, with some good looking hotels and a large post-office building, and in another part of the town are the big municipal buildings and court-house, the court-house or Raad-zaal being at this time used as a hospital. One point of interest particularly will be remembered by most of the Tommies who have been in Bloemfontein, the "Bon Accord" restaurant near the Market Place, where old Mackenzie must have made a comfortable fortune with his dinners and meals supplied to Thomas Atkins ; the house being crowded at every meal time. But there were many sad features connected with this fine big town, the enormous number of deaths from enteric fever and other diseases being appalling, and the big cemetery and other burying grounds being fearfully crowded with the remains of our poor fellows who had died there.

It was now only three days before Christmas, and it seemed almost certain that we would remain here until after Christmas Day, and in fact it was reported that our officers had made special arrangements for a festive time for all of us, but we were doomed to be disappointed, and on the evening of the 22nd suddenly

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received orders to "saddle up," and marched to the railway station, where we soon had our horses boxed, and we crowded ourselves into the open cattle trucks which were provided for our transportation. Fortunately the weather was fine and we travelled cautiously down the line for two days and nights past Norval's Pont and De Aar to Victoria West in Cape Colony, having had to stop several times on the way while the line, which was constantly being blown up by some of the enemy, was repaired and we could proceed.

Christmas on the Veldt in Hot Weather.

We arrived at Victoria West on Christmas Day, and spent the morning unloading the train and arranging our kits, etc., ready to march away, as soon as we received orders, to the North Western part of the Colony, where De Wet and several commandoes had lately crossed the Orange River and were coming South in large numbers, collecting many recruits from amongst the Dutch farmers, who, though they were British subjects, assisted the enemy and hindered us in every possible manner, though in many cases they were undoubtedly terrorized by the enemy and had little choice. This part of the country is very barren and poorly settled, such few townships as exist being quite small and far between, but the farmers in these parts had large quantities of horses, and there were hundreds of good animals which could soon be made serviceable and suitable for war purposes, and it was the combined attractions of recruits and horses which brought about a second big invasion of Cape Colony by the Boers. Little had we thought when we waited

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impatiently at Picquetberg, and imagined ourselves so neglected, that nearly a year later the enemy would be fighting, not only in that district, but actually on the scene of our old camp, rekindling the sympathetic tendency of the Dutch Colonials towards the Boers, and practically starting afresh a new and very serious phase of the war. We spent our Christmas morning as cheerfully as such barren and uninteresting surroundings would allow, and by a stroke of good fortune, and the kindly forethought of the officers, received a present of Christmas puddings, pipes and tobacco, and a bottle of beer to each man. At about midday we received orders to saddle up, and had to postpone our festivities until the evening, when we camped outside the small town of Victoria West, which is about six miles from the railway, we mounted men being sent on in advance of the remainder of the column to get to Carnarvon, an important town some distance North, as quickly as possible in order to intercept a large commando of Boers who were reported to be "making" directly for this town.

We left Victoria West early next morning, and after two days hard marching over some of the worst country for the horse's feet we had experienced, arrived at Carnarvon just in time to occupy it before the Boers, though we did not know until some time afterwards how close a race it had been, and how dangerous a position our small body of mounted troops had been in when we first arrived there. Had it not been that another column under Colonel De Lisle was in hot pursuit and close on the heels of the commandoes which threatened us, we should undoubtedly have had our work cut out to hold Carnarvon, as the enemy were in overwhelming numbers; fortunately the Boers decided to keep

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moving and left us in possession. For the first forty-eight hours we were kept hard at work preparing the approaches to the town against attack, and getting very little rest day or night. Strong wire entanglements were fixed at certain points, and small sections of men were kept busy building "schantzs" or low walls with the rocks which lay around and entrenching the camp. A prominent hill close at hand was strongly guarded on top, and would have given the enemy a lot of trouble if they had attacked us. The enemy were so close that we saw several parties of them moving amongst the neighbouring hills, and the day after we arrived some of our scouts returned to camp, having been caught by the Boers and condemned to die, but the fact of Colonel De Lisle's column suddenly appearing on the scene caused the Boers to leave in a hurry, and the scouts managed to escape. Two days afterwards the rest of our column under Sir Chas. Parsons arrived and relieved us from the responsibility which we were not sorry to turn over to them, the infantry and artillery now taking up positions which guaranteed the safety of the town from attack by any stray commando travelling around these parts. We mounted men being now relieved from our position of guard, moved our camp to the shelter of a long cemetery wall, against which we soon erected shelters of corrugated iron and blankets to protect us from the rain and hot summer sun. While we were passing through Victoria West a few days previously, we happened to hear that there were letters for us, which was always the most welcome news, and we were waiting anxiously for them to arrive at Carnarvon, but, alas! a great disappointment was in store for us, the report arriving that the mail cart had fallen into the hands of the Boers, who had

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amused themselves by reading our correspondence and then destroying everything; what they could gain by such spiteful little acts was difficult to see. We left Carnarvon a few days later, and had a long march to Fraserburg, where we were glad to find some good stores well supplied with a variety of provisions, and what always appealed to us more than anything else in these times, some loaves of bread—a luxury indeed after living for weeks on hard biscuits.

The Boers had been seen several times close to the town, but they had evidently been in a hurry to move on, and had not favoured the town with a visit, of which most of the inhabitants seemed relieved, as they knew that the Boers were in the habit of helping themselves to what they wanted without payment for goods received. The next morning we started away early again, leaving the main column at Fraserburg, and marching to Sutherland, overtaking a large body of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry (T.M.I.), who had been, and were still—like ourselves—flying about the colony in pursuit of the commandoes who were causing so much trouble just now, or occupying the towns. The Boers had been in Sutherland just previous to our arrival, and were still hanging about the neighbourhood; we left again on the following day, and climbed up to a large farm a few miles outside the town, called Jackalsfontein, a fearfully exposed position, where, although it was now mid-summer, we had frequent hailstorms and cold rain, and which is not fit even for the Dutch farmer to live there in winter. It happened to be a very valuable military position, being the key to important passes through which the enemy would have to come if they intended to dispute our possession of this part of the

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country. This is the heart of a rough mountainous district called "The Roggevelt," and consists of miles and miles of deep chasms, up which wonderful roads have been cut out of the sides of the mountains, winding for miles amongst the precipices, and being the only means of getting over this wild country, so that whichever of two parties controls the road through these mountain ranges controls the whole district. What attraction there can be to farmers in such a place is a mystery; the soil consists of rough stones, and most part of the year the climate is impossible. However, the farmer at Jackalsfontein seemed disposed to be friendly, and, as a matter of fact, served us well as a guide later on, when a few of us were sent on patrol over a dangerous district where the enemy were known to be. He had a fairly comfortable dwelling, and the usual old-time corn mill attached to the dwelling, which is driven by blindfolded donkeys, which are taught to walk round and round a post to which they are attached, and which causes a heavy circular stone to revolve and grind the corn, reminding one of the stories of such things in Old Testament times; even the farmer himself gives one the impression of his having been forgotten and overlooked in these outlandish parts, and might have lived here for centuries.

We had settled down here for a week or so, making ourselves as comfortable as possible in the barns and outhouses, and rigging up shelters with what material was at hand in the way of wagon covers and walls, when a party of a dozen of us with our sergeant, were told off to visit a farm about twenty miles away at the bottom of one of the deep passes, and to remain there until sent for. These detached duties were always considered to be a privilege,

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and as a matter of fact, there were generally advantages to be had when there was only a small number to be considered, as on this occasion, and we left Jackalsfontein with comparatively light hearts and a sense of relief. It did not take us long to get over the ground, and we arrived at Schietfontein, which was fortunately in a lower and more sheltered position, to find that the owner had been summoned to appear before the authorities to give an account of himself, he having been accused of assisting the enemy. However, the rest of the family seemed to be fairly well disposed towards us, and we made the most of the available barns and stables to shelter ourselves and our horses. This was another of those occasions on which a little knowledge of drawing and a few colours proved valuable to me. A little tact and suavity from our gallant sergeant, the perseverance and amiability of our most successful cook (poor Cecil Longland! would that we could meet again to talk over those old times, but that awful scourge — enteric fever — got hold of him), and a little sketch of the homestead, soon put us in the good graces of the ladies at the farm, and undoubtedly helped to make our surroundings more tolerable, and paved the way to friendship which is so indispensable to the two nationalities in South Africa—Dutch and English. The young farmer returned home on the following day, and from his attitude to us hereafter we concluded that he had been sufficiently scared by his summons to determine to lie low and be loyal.

We had been here for about a week when a party of the Infantry were sent to take our place, as we were needed immediately for special duty in another part of the country, and we can only hope that our successors did not undo the good

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which we had done in cementing good feeling between the two parties.

Amongst the mountains in Western Cape Colony.

When we got back to Jackalsfontein we found that a great part of the troops had already moved away, and our instructions were to go by a certain road to a place called Achterkop, the other troops being already on the way to the same spot, but by a different road. The farmer came with us as our guide, and the road lay through an immense kloof or pass—Verlaten Kloof—which is eight miles long, the edge of the narrow road looking down over a sheer precipice to the bottom, which is in places hundreds of feet below. At the end of the kloof we stopped at the farm of an old fellow who originally hailed from Lancashire, but who had spent most of his time making the fine roads which open up this mountainous district. We had to cover seventy miles before we could reach our destination, and our orders were to get there as quickly as possible. It was a very risky journey for so small a party as ours, as the enemy were known to be moving about this district, and could easily snap us up if they caught sight of us. However, we had almost come to the end of our journey, having ridden nearly seventy miles in two days, the last three or four miles being by an almost impassable track up a precipice, by which we could only climb in single file dismounted, and allowing the horses to pick their way as best they could. We had almost arrived at the top of the precipice when we were suddenly brought to an abrupt standstill by shots being fired at us apparently from all sides. Our sergeant, who had been one of the first to lead the way,

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turned back with a bad wound in the arm and shouted to us to keep down, and we all thought that we were trapped by the enemy. The bullets continued to drop amongst us, and as we lay on the ground discussing amongst ourselves the next most advisable move, the situation seemed almost hopeless ; if we advanced we should certainly be shot, and if we tried to retrace our steps down the precipice the supposed enemy would soon have the advantage of us, and be able to pick us off comfortably from their position above. After waiting some time in this position, one of our fellows climbed stealthily up the side where he could see better what was ahead of us, and soon discovered that the shots were coming from a party of our own fellows who had arrived there on the previous day. This was some relief, and we all shouted "Yeomanry!" as hard as we could. Evidently our shouting had the desired effect, and in a short time we were joined by those who so recently had wanted to annihilate us, and who had mistaken us for some of the enemy—a similar experience with a patrol of the real enemy having actually occurred on the previous day, one of them being taken prisoner, and several horses having been captured by our fellows. It had been a decidedly unpleasant experience, and it was a marvellously fortunate chance that more of us were not hit, our sergeant having been hit in the arm, which made a nasty wound.

We were, of course, greatly relieved to find that we should not have to spend the night in the hands of the enemy, as we undoubtedly should have done if it had been as we imagined, and we had really walked right into the arms of the Boers. The mistake had arisen partly on account of the failing light of the evening, in which it was difficult to identify moving figures, and

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partly because our little party was not expected to come that way, and the enemy might be expected at any time. We soon arrived at the farm called Achter Kop, which had been our objective point, and where some of the troops who had left Jackalsfontein before us had arrived the day before, having come by another road.

As at Jackalsfontein, we were again high up among the clouds, which frequently enveloped the camp while we stayed here, and in the heart of rugged mountains—a spur of the Roggeveldt, between Sutherland and Calvinia. This farm was practically the key to Gannaga Pass, down which a fine road wound around, as it descended to the valley several miles beyond. Strong guards were posted by day and night at the head of this Pass, as also at the head of Lange Kloof, by which we had arrived on the previous day, and at points around the camp wherever an attack might be expected. Every man in camp had to take his turn on guard—officers, officers' servants, cooks and quartermasters doing their two hours on and four off until the Colonel, with the remainder of the battalion, arrived, which they did two days' later, having come from Jackalsfontein over a fearfully bad road, and just dodging a large body of the enemy, who were waiting to intercept them before they could join us. It was a most dangerous and difficult position for so small a body of troops as we were to hold, and we waited anxiously for the enemy, who were moving about close by in commandoes of three or four hundred men, to attack us.

For some unknown reason we were left in undisputed possession, although a small party of our fellows who were in charge of a mule wagon with supplies had a most exciting run for their lives

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for eight or nine miles chased by the Boers, the mules pulling the wagon across the country in racing style, and landing it sufficiently close to our camp at Achter Kop to be under our protection before the Boers could overtake it. The farmer at Achter Kop took little trouble to disguise his feelings towards us, which were not of the kindest. He was a bad member of a bad family, named Visagi, others of the same family living on farms in the neighbourhood, and all having a very unenviable reputation ; however, he was soon made to understand that it would be best for him to behave himself, and we made what use we could of his kraals for our horses and his barns for ourselves. Fortunately for us, he had a good supply of oat-hay, of which we made good use to feed our horses, and some meal, of which his family made bread for us. These mountain farms are only habitable during a few months in the summer, the families coming down to a lower altitude in the winter, the climate being too severe and the position too exposed to live there. Even at this time, in mid-summer, snow and hail and cold storms swept over our camp in the clouds, making the wee tot of rum which was occasionally served out to us—if we were lucky, and the Quartermaster's department, which included numerous attendants, could spare it ; but these occasions were rare indeed, causing Tommy to say very rude things about the department referred to, one of the most seriously discussed questions in campaign times being "Who pinched the rum ?"

About 18 miles from Achter Kop, as we came from Jackals-fontein, we had halted at an exceptionally comfortable, clean little farm, residence, post office, and store combined, which could at a glance be recognised as the home of a Britisher. It is one of those

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charming homes which one occasionally happens upon in these unsettled parts, which come as a surprise, and are such a relief from the miserable conventional Dutch farmhouses usually seen in these parts. The district is known as Middlepost, the family living here, named Nightingale, being the only British for many miles around, Mr. Nightingale being the magistrate, and a fine representative of his race. He was particularly pleased to welcome us at this time, three different parties of the enemy having laagered around his house just previous to our arrival, and were still hanging about in the neighbourhood. They had already helped themselves to most of his supplies, and had taken three wagon loads of provisions from his store, leaving little behind for the family. Four of us were sent from Achter Kop to remain here and to carry despatches from one camp to another in different parts of the country, each taking them in turn as they were brought to us. At the same time we acted as a small guard, and patrolled the district frequently. Many of the Dutch farmers around were known to be rebels, and to have assisted the enemy when they came to those parts, and we had the pleasure of escorting them to Middlepost as prisoners to be tried by our Colonel. After the months of wearisome marching and tedious camp life, these few days spent at Middlepost will be remembered by four of us as the happiest time in the whole of our war experiences ; but it has been a terrible loss to Mr. Nightingale, who, since we left there, has had to leave everything and bring his family to Cape Town, the Boers having returned again and occupied his home, which had cost him so many years of hard work, and where he had seen his family and his property increasing around him.

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Such instances as this—and the country is full of them—are sufficient to convince us of the merits of the cause for which we volunteered our services, and we can only regret that sufficient protection could not have been given to all our people to prevent such sad consequences as have come about. Even while we were there we had to be continually on the watch and prepared for the enemy, who might appear at any moment: so much so that, returning from a distant camp one evening just before dark, I imagined I could see a large number of strange figures in possession of the farm at Middlepost. This made me cautious, and I spent some time in watching the figures in the distance through my glasses. Everything seemed to favour my impression that the enemy were in possession; there were wagons and horses and figures apparently in laager around the house—a crowd which had certainly not been there when I left. So I determined to wait until it was quite dark; and after securing my horse and noting the place where I had left him, I crept cautiously towards the farm, intending to get under cover close to the new arrivals and find out who they were, and, if need be, return to my horse and ride to the nearest camp, which was 18 miles away, and give the alarm. Fortunately, I was saved the trouble of doing this, as I soon discovered when I got close to the farm that the new arrivals were a party of our own fellows who had come in from another camp during my absence, which was a great relief to me, as I had already had a hard day's ride, and did not feel much inclined to repeat the journey.

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Chasing Rebels in Eastern Cape Colony.

At last, on March 9th, news arrived that we were to leave these parts, and we received orders to join our Company at Achter Kop, and were soon on the march again *en route* for Matjesfontein and the railway line, and possibly for home ; but, alas ! we were again to be disappointed, and still had some of the hardest weeks of our campaigning before us. Following the fine, winding road, which is a striking feature of the country and a triumph of engineering skill, through Gannaga Pass, we halted for the night at a farm at the foot of Lange Kloof, at the top of which we had been so nearly wiped out by our comrades when we first arrived there. We were now several hundred feet lower than we had been for some weeks, and marched along the fine big valley which leads to Verlaten Kloof and Jackalsfontein. Striking the base of Verlaten Kloof we quickly covered the ground, halting the next night near the Jews' store, and about 18 miles from Matjesfontein, where we arrived about noon on the following day. We heard that our partners of the 24th Company had arrived on the previous day and had left again almost immediately, bound for Naaupoort, at which place we were to join them as soon as possible. We just had time to have a look round at the fine hotel and residence which a prosperous and enterprising man has built here, and to replenish our stores, when orders came for us to entrain, and we were soon travelling back up the country again, arriving at Naaupoort Junction at midnight on the following night, having travelled three or four hundred miles north again. This did not look much like being homeward bound, and although it was only a few weeks before we did actually embark on the transport which carried us home to England, these few weeks

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were as full of incident and hardships as any previous period of our campaigning. The wild, mountainous country and immense area and distances, the continually-spreading rebellion of the Dutch rebels, and consequent difficulty of being able to distinguish between friend and foe, made the situation as troublesome as it ever had been in the Transvaal or the Free State. As we were by this time in a deplorable state of rags and worn equipment, and there was a good supply of Army stores on hand here, we were served out with a new outfit of both saddlery and clothing. The following day we entrained again, and travelled down the country in an entirely new direction, and into the heart of the worst and most rebellious district in the Colony. We were turned out at a little place called Cookhouse, about 100 miles south of Naaupoort and not far from Somerset East, on the night of the 16th, where we found our friends of the 24th Company in camp on the Recreation Ground close at hand. We were close to the great Fish River, which was in full flood from the heavy rain and storms which were frequent at this time.

It is a very pretty part of the country, the river running through deep gorges and mountain passes on its way to the coast, and the country being more wooded and picturesque than any through which we had previously marched. The enemy were reported to be in laager not far away, and we immediately prepared to make a night attack on them, but we were too late; and when we arrived we found that they had evidently been alarmed and had moved away. A patrol of the 24th Company who visited Somerset East were entertained and fêted in grand style by the inhabitants, many of whom were Britishers, and were naturally highly pleased to feel that they were being protected

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from the rebels, who were known to be numerous in those parts. We left again next day, and went back by train to Rosmead Junction, where the new contingent of the Duke's Own were encamped, waiting to join us, and we hoped to relieve us. There were some interesting meetings between the men of the two contingents when we arrived, most of the new men being acquainted with some of the old original Company, and expressing the same in true Lancashire style and language. The new men turned out to be in a very raw state at that time, but were soon licked into shape by our worthy Sergeant-Major and the officers. Next day orders came for us to join Colonel Henniker's Column at Steynsburg, and we left Rosmead before daybreak. On the march we came across scouts and small parties of the enemy and gave chase, but the country is so difficult, and the enemy so well acquainted with all the roads, &c., that it was impossible to capture them.

At noon on the second day we came up with Colonel Henniker's column, which consisted of three squadrons of Bushmen from Australia, the 65th and 71st Companies of Imperial Yeomanry, two guns of M Battery R.H.A., a Company of the 2nd Coldstreams, and our own 23rd and 24th Companies I.Y. We continued to chase the enemy in that district for several days, returned to Steynsburg on the 25th March, but left again next day and marched to Schoombee, where we were able to rest for two days, and were badly in need of it. We started off again and came round once more to Steynsburg, the whole of that district being a hotbed of treason and rebellion. During the march we came across the dead bodies of two of our black scouts, who had been caught by the Boers and evidently horribly

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tortured and their bodies mutilated. It was a shocking sight, and showed the sort of brutes we had to deal with. From Steynsburg we went by train to Fish River, about 80 miles south, and stayed there for two or three days, our scouts and patrols constantly coming in touch with parties of the enemy. At one big farm where the enemy were known to congregate, we tried to trap some of them, but they must have been forewarned ; however, we destroyed the place, and got some loot in the way of pigs, chickens, &c., and took the women and children, with some of their household chattels, back to our camp. It was now reported that the enemy were at Spitzkop, between Fish River and Graaf Reinet, so we started on the march again, trekking around those parts and dodging from one place to another after the wily enemy, frequently coming in touch with parties of their rearguard and scouts, but they never showed any inclination to make a stand against us ; and as they had no wagons or impediments of transport, and depended on the support given to them by the farmers or what they could commandeer from stores for subsistence, it was not difficult for them to keep out of danger. We entrained at Bethesda Road, travelling for two days to Aberdeen Road, and passing through Kendrew, where a strong party of the Boers under Kritzinger had just previously destroyed the Government Stores, and even succeeding in capturing a Company of the Imperial Yeomanry between Aberdeen and Graaf-Reinet. From Aberdeen Road our two Companies, the 23rd and 24th, were sent as escort to an Elswick gun to Aberdeen, a distance of thirty miles, where we stayed during the following day, leaving again on a forced march in the evening. It was a fearfully dark night, and some of the wagons capsized in the hurry and darkness.

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After struggling on for two or three hours it was discovered that the guide had lost his bearings, and we had to halt until daylight, when we struck the right road, and after crossing the Sunday River, which is prettily wooded about here, we came to Kendrew. Col. Henniker was here, and was evidently in a desperate hurry to get the troops on the march, it being reported that the Boer leaders Malan and Scheepers were in the neighbourhood, which subsequent events proved to be the case.

For the next few days we were constantly in touch with strong parties of the enemy around Pearston, in a wild, mountainous district between the Sunday River and the Fish River, several of the Bushmen being wounded as we tried to round up the enemy, but they knew the country well and always had an outlet by which to escape, and managed to dodge us. From Pearston we came into Somerset East, and were again welcomed and entertained by the hospitable inhabitants.

Homeward Bound at Last.

We were now on the last lap of our campaigning, and as we waited at a small station called Thorngrove, the line having been blown up at Mortimer, a little farther north, we received the welcome news that we were to leave the column, and would soon be on a train bound for Cape Town, where a boat was ready to take us back to England. Of course the fellows went nearly mad at this good news, and were quite satisfied to get any sort of conveyance to take us on our last African railway journey. The line was being blown up so frequently that travelling was very dangerous, and we crawled cautiously up to Naauwpoort and De Aar, and then down again to Cape Town, taking five days to do the journey.

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When we arrived at Cape Town we were taken straight to the Docks, every precaution being taken to prevent the men going into the town on account of the awful plague which was increasing daily in Cape Town at this time, and needed the most strict regulations and attention. After falling in and being examined by the doctor on the quay, we went aboard the fine transport the Avondale Castle, which was to carry us home. Our accommodation was certainly not as comfortable as had been provided for us on the Afric when we left home, but we were not fastidious and made the most of the sweltering, crowded hammock accommodation which was provided, most of us bringing our hammock on deck and slinging it between two supports when the atmosphere became too sultry and tropical, and the big fat rats too familiar.

The boat was packed with over twelve hundred troops, details from several different regiments, and the scene of hundreds of sun-burnt, veldt-stained soldiers homeward bound after many months of hard campaigning in a strange land is one to be long remembered. The sea voyage is long and tedious, and none too comfortable for Tommy, who has to devise some means of passing the time during the three weeks' voyage. The duties are naturally not onerous, and amongst so many in so small a space do not recur very often, so Tommy is left to amuse himself in his own way. The most common and prevailing style is to gamble and frequently lose all his hard-earned savings at games of chance, which the enterprising ones produce, and which very soon attract a goodly crowd. Large sums continually change hands in this way, and such a mania is created that few get through the voyage without indulging more or less in the fascinating craze. The

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most popular form of gambling is a game called "Crown and Anchor," which consists of a sheet or board which is divided into six sections, each division having some distinguishing sign such as a crown, an anchor, an ace or a king. Dice, which are marked on the sides with signs corresponding to those on the sheet, are thrown and the gambling proceeds. Others play banker or roulette, or do a bit of business in the milk line, buying tins of condensed milk from the store, which with plenty of dilution from the pump, makes a harmless, and in the tropical weather, a not unprofitable trade and pastime. Even in the hottest weather there is an astonishing amount of life and interest around, the various cries and inducements of the speculators to attract patrons making a din and excitement more common to a fair or a racecourse—"'Ere yer are, the fairest game on the ship!"—"'Oo sez a lucky crown?"—"'Ouse about?"—"'Oo sez a cooler?"—"The more money yer puts down, the more yer takes up!"—and so on, will long be remembered by all who have returned from the war.

At last at the end of the second week the ship arrived either at St. Vincent or some port in the Canary Islands, and possibly needs to take aboard more coal with which to complete the third week of the voyage and take us to Southampton, which means about two days' hard work for the niggers transferring the coal from the barges which soon come alongside to the bunkers of the ship. No sooner has the big ship dropped her anchor than a swarm of small boats put out from the shore well-stocked with oranges, bananas, coral, tobacco, monkeys, parrots, etc., most of which are eagerly bought by the soldiers, who amuse themselves for hours trading with the native Portuguese and darkies, and throwing

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coppers into the clear green sea for the little naked niggers to dive for. With a fresh supply of coal we make good time for the next week, and are soon steaming up the Solent and back to our own shores, probably never to have an opportunity or the necessity to offer our services in such an undertaking again, and justly proud of having shared in one of the greatest struggles of modern warfare.

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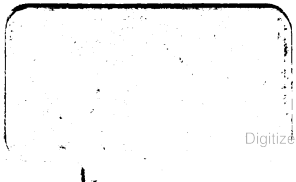
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